SPECIAL PEACE CAMPAIGN ISSUE

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 18 August, 1936 Number 8

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

THE WORLD PEACE CONGRESS

R.P.D., GEORGE HICKS, M.P., and others

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THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 18 AUGUST, 1936 NUMBER 8

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The World Peace Congress—New Advances of the War Danger —"Reform" of the League of Nations—Britain and the "Failure of Collective Security"—The Attack on the Franco-Soviet Pact — Pro-Nazism in Britain — The National Government's Policy—Paving the way to War — The Attack on Collective Security — Line of the Peace Movement — Defeatist Tendencies — Reformism and the "End of Collective Security" — The Answer to Defeatism—The Mass Fight and the League of Nations — The Rôle of the World Peace Congress

THE World Peace Congress, which has been summoned for September, has been called none too soon. It is faced with a very urgent task if it is to be equal to the needs of the present world situation. The World Peace Congress, summoned by a wide Initiatory Committee ranging from Lord Cecil of the British League of Nations Union to Schwernik of the Soviet Trade Unions, represents the first attempt to mobilise the mass peace forces throughout the world on a positive programme of struggle for peace in every country against the war makers. The working-class movement and the supporters of peace will need to concentrate every attention, and to exert every effort, not only to ensure the maximum representation, but to fight for clearness of line and to secure positive, practical results. There is no time nor place for the old type of conference of pious pacifist aspirations which has been the normal accompaniment of the advance of imperialism to war. *To-day we are requiring to mobilise all forces for a specific struggle —the struggle against the supreme offensive of the decaying imperialist reaction, expressed in the fascist war offensive, directly led by the fascist Powers, with the support of the pro-fascist and reactionary elements in every imperialist country, and threatening to bring the extreme of destruction, barbarism and enslavement*

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over the world. The World Peace Congress will achieve its purpose only in so far as it is conscious of its rôle as an initial step in this mobilisation.

EVERY month the war offensive is advancing with accelerating speed. *It is advancing because of the still continuing division and confusion of the potentially superior peace forces.* The war offensive of the fascist Powers has already trampled the League Covenant under foot. The offensive is now being turned on to the basis of the Covenant itself. In September, the month for which the World Peace Congress has been called, the British Government is due to bring forward its proposals for the revision of the League Covenant. The significance of this step stands out in the context of the world situation. Each step of aggression has been met with capitulation, and has thus paved the way for the next. From Japan in the Far East to Italy in Africa, from Germany in the Rhineland to Germany in Danzig, the same history has been repeated. Through this process the power and menace of the Fascist offensive has been steadily increased. By the German-Austrian agreement the bloc of the fascist Powers in Central Europe is now in process of being built up (temporarily in the case of Germany and Italy, in view of the underlying antagonisms, but more basically in respect of the increasing Nazi domination in Central Europe), terrorising the smaller states, undermining the peace alignment of the Little Entente and encircling Czechoslovakia. At Montreux the British hand of direct opposition to the Franco-Soviet Pact, the sole remaining bulwark of peace, was for the first time openly shown. By the London Conference of the Locarno Powers steps are being prepared for a Western European Security Pact, with a remilitarised and fortified Rhineland, thus leaving the path open for German expansion in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time the British Government from within the League turns the attack on the universal obligations of collective security embodied in the League Covenant in order to replace them by limited regional obligations. It is impossible to fail to see where this line is leading. This is the concrete situation which the World Peace Congress has to face.

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WHAT are the proposals of the British Government for the revision of the League Covenant? These proposals are not yet published; and official expression still adheres to formal lip-service to the ideal of collective security and to professions of the necessity of strengthening the League. But there can be no doubt of the real purport of the policy. This was already clear in the speech of Eden at the League Assembly in July. In bringing forward the demand that the question of revising the League Covenant should be placed on the agenda of the September Assembly, Eden explained that the ideal of full collective security was impossible of attainment, and that in consequence

> if such an ideal cannot be attained at present, it is surely our duty to amend, not necessarily our rule of law, but the methods by which it is to be enforced so that these may correspond to the action which nations are in fact ready and willing to take.

As against this the French Foreign Minister, Delbos, declared that

> the French delegation will not propose any amendment of the Covenant, because they do not wish to call into question any of its principles and thereby weaken both its scope and action.

Here between the British and French positions is revealed an essential conflict. For the League Covenant lays down, not merely "principles" of the "rule of law," but very definitely "methods" for its enforcement—which have never been carried out. Since they have not been carried out, and the failure to carry them out has led to disastrous consequences, the British Government draws the conclusion, not that they must be carried out in future if peace is to be preserved, but that they must be "amended" in such a way as to "correspond to the action which nations are in fact ready and willing to take," *i.e.*, in such a way as to be guaranteed ineffective. The British proposals are thus to *limit* the scope and effectiveness of the Covenant, *i.e.*, to *weaken the Covenant*.

THAT this is the line of British policy is abundantly confirmed, not only by the speeches of Government Ministers, but still more by semi-official expression, and notably of late by the recent editorials of the *Times* during the

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past two months, which have at any rate served the purpose of awakening opinion to the realities of the dominant policy of the National Government. "The policy of collective security based on sanctions has been tried out, and it has failed." This was the keynote of Neville Chamberlain's famous "thinking aloud" speech to the 1900 Club on June 10. The inaccuracy of the argument is not for the moment important; in fact, as Litvinov trenchantly demonstrated in his speech at Geneva in July, the policy of Article 16 was never attempted to be carried out, and was consistently sabotaged by both the National Government and Laval. The National Government first throws a monkey wrench into the machinery and then complains that the car won't run. But what is important is the conclusion drawn, whether based on conscious disingenuity or innocent confusion. For the conclusion drawn is to condemn, not the National Government ("we have nothing to reproach ourselves with"), but the League Covenant and the system of collective security. *This is what unites with the line of Fascism.* "The League is good, but air squadrons and army corps are still better." The words of Goebbels at Munich on June 29 echo the words of Neville Chamberlain on June 10. The British National Government is not yet consciously on the same side of the fence as the fascist Powers, nor ever can be fully, owing to the antagonisms. But they are conducting a common hunt together against the basis of the League Covenant and collective security, against the policy of "indivisible peace" of the Soviet Union and People's Front France, and therefore for war.

WHERE this line leads has been made explicit in the recent series of *Times* editorials (especially June 4, "The British Part"; June 16, "A Matter of Dates"; June 19, "After Sanctions"; July 6, "The League and Germany"; and July 19, "Enter Russia"). Although these editorials are more outspoken than official diplomatic expression, they correspond closely to the practice of the National Government's policy. The keynote of the whole line, the repudiation of any general obligations of collective security outside the region

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of special British interests in Western Europe and the Mediterranean, the call for an Anglo-German understanding, and the call for a bloc of Britain, France and Germany, is identical with the keynote of every speech of Baldwin. But the significance of this line, the direct hostility to the Soviet Union (the " Enter Russia " editorial), the direct hostility to the Franco-Soviet Pact (" the Franco-Societ Pact is not regarded here as a helpful diplomatic achievement," July 6), and the endeavour to detach France from the Franco-Soviet Pact is made explicit in the *Times* editorials :

> What British opinion is not prepared to accept is the leadership of France over the whole field of foreign politics, or to admit responsibility for all the liabilities which she has been accumulating since the War in the shape of alliances on the farther side of Germany. The Franco-Soviet Pact is not regarded here as a helpful diplomatic achievement. (*Times*, July 6, 1936.)

Here is the crux of the fight in the open. *Britain is not merely concerned to repudiate the obligations of collective security in Central and Eastern Europe, but to detach France equally from any such obligations, since the commitment of France may otherwise none the less involve Britain.* Therefore Britain fights not only to destroy the formal basis of universal collective security expressed in the League Covenant, and to bring Germany into a " reformed " League (*i.e.*, " made safe for aggressors "), but equally, and as a necessary corollary, to destroy the Franco-Soviet Pact, which is the practical expression of general collective security and of the unity of Western and Eastern Europe. By this fight British policy in practice clears the path for the openly expressed expansionist war aims of Fascism in Central and Eastern Europe.

THIS line of the National Government and of the dominant forces of British Imperialism is not identical *in intention* with the open pro-fascist line of the fascist and pro-fascist elements, represented by Londonderry, Rothermere, Mosley, etc. These call for the direct alliance of Britain with Nazi-Germany and Fascist Italy against the Soviet Union and against People's Front France. They think on direct class lines of

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the fight against the working-class revolution as the supreme issue. Their view was typically expressed by the *Daily Mail :*

> The continental hegemony of France is over. She is divided by deep internal differences. Her new Government will be under the dangerous influence of Moscow. . . . .As for the League of Nations, Britain has paid a humiliating price for the discovery that the only result of its activities is to involve this country in immediate and formidable dangers. If the Communism now spreading over Spain and France were to infect other nations, we could have no more useful friends than the two governments, the German and the Italian, which have crushed it on their own soil. Of late years all our attention has been given to the risk of international conflicts; the class-war of Bolshevism may prove to be a danger closer still.
>
> (*Daily Mail*, June 16, 1936.)

This outlook of pure-and-simple class-consciousness is not adequate to the complicated problems of British Imperialism. The pro-fascist elements deliberately seek to turn a blind eye to the menace of Nazi Germany to British imperialistic interests. Hence follows the paradoxical situation that the super-jingo British Fascists and *Daily Mail* are the most vocal in demanding the surrender of British colonies to Germany—a demand indignantly repudiated by the majority of the Conservative Party in the resolution at their recent Conference. Herein is typically expressed the contradiction of the present position of British Imperialism, which finds its reflection in the present sharp conflicts on foreign policy within the ruling class.

BUT while it is necessary to keep closely in view these divisions of policy, which increase the possibilities for popular agitation to drive in a wedge and deflect the direction of policy, what is important at the present moment is that these two lines, the line of the open pro-fascist elements outside the National Government, and the line of the National Government which seeks to steer a middle course, are in the existing situation united in their practical effect, *i.e.*, in the attack on the basis of collective security. The dominant forces of British Imperialism, represented by the National Government, have no illusions as to the ultimate menace of Nazi Germany to their interests ; but they seek to divert the offensive

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from the regions of immediate British interests, from Western Europe and the British Empire, to Central and Eastern Europe. This policy requires the destruction of the basis of collective security. In a sense it is perfectly true that they are seeking to promote " peace," although their policy is making war certain. They are not seeking to promote Nazi war for its own sake ; they are only seeking to divert it from the region of British interests ; if the resulting offensive should turn, as promised, against the class enemy, the Soviet Union, the consequent prospect of one enemy wearing out another in deadly conflict, while Britain maintains a profitable neutrality, is regarded with equanimity, or, in the case of the active anti-Soviet elements, with hopefulness and the aim of direct participation.

THE suicidal character of this calculation is manifest ; for it not only makes the present British policy the vassal of each step of Nazi aggression (the contemptuous Nazi treatment of the British questionnaire illustrating this relationship), but the final Nazi offensive may break out in directions far from calculated by Britain. Hence the opposition of a few of the more far-sighted Conservative elements, who see in collective security the only policy for British Imperialism. But this calculation is too far-sighted for the main body of British Conservatism, who, while extremely suspicious of Nazi Germany, are still more suspicious of collective security as likely to involve Britain in unwanted obligations on the same side as the Soviet Union and the People's-Front France. Thereby Britain, willingly or unwillingly, is turned into the ally of Nazi Germany in practice. The open pro-fascist elements may be in the main outside the Cabinet ; Baldwin and Eden may have the most benevolent vague intentions, like Asquith and Grey before 1914 ; but at each decisive turn the open pro-fascist elements have the whip hand, so long as the issue of collective security is not faced and fought out in Britain ; and that issue can only be finally dealt with by bringing down the National Government from power and by the victory of the people's front.

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THE opposition to any general obligations of collective security, professedly for fear of being involved in war, expresses itself explicitly, not as a conscious pro-fascist anti-Soviet line, but merely as the policy of confining British obligations to Western Europe. But this policy coincides in its effect with that of the powerful sections which openly support Nazi Germany and its plans of a war of expansion to the East. *The net effect of both policies is to pave the way to war.* With ominous similarity to 1914, British policy, while professedly seeking peace, is pursuing a line which, if continued, would make war certain. This is the situation which underlies the present issue of collective security, whose outcome depends above all on the relation of forces in Britain.

IN this situation what must be the line of the forces supporting peace? Here we come to the most dangerous element in the situation. For precisely at this moment, when imperialism is delivering its decisive assault on the whole basis of collective security, as the necessary preliminary to clear the ground for fascist war in Europe, a section of the peace movement has fallen straight into the trap, and is beginning to repeat the parrot-cry of imperialism that "collective security is dead," as a supposedly "realist" and even (save the mark!) "revolutionary" line, without realising that it is thereby doing precisely what imperialism wishes and playing into the hands of the imperialist war offensive. *This is nothing but the typical demoralisation of reformism at the moment when the fight needs to be fought the hardest.* This demoralisation is a sign and reflection of the growing intensity of the war offensive.

OTTO BAUER, the patron saint of capitulation to capitalism in the name of "Marxist" theory, comes out at this moment with his book entitled "Between Two World Wars?" to prove that war is inevitable under mperialism, that the hopes entertained in the League of Nations were bound to be illusory, that there is no means of preventing war under capitalism, etc. The progressive Liberal-Labour journal, the *New Statesman and Nation*, also a former devoted

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adherent of the League of Nations, comes out with an article entitled "The End of Collective Security" (July 11, 1936), declaring that

> Looking back to-day we can see that the League. . . . .was bound in any case to be a failure. . . . For the time let us honestly recognise that "collective security" and the "collective system" no longer exist

and advocating accordingly a "frankly revolutionary policy" of "non-co-operation and an avowed policy of war resistance except in the unlikely event of a genuine reconstitution of the League" instead of "to go on mouthing collective security." Since the object of the National Government's policy is precisely to secure "non-co-operation" with the victims of fascist aggression in the event of Nazi war in Europe, it is difficult to see how this "frankly revolutionary policy" of "non-co-operation" in the event of war is going to assist to check the fascist war offensive.

THE heart of reformism is defeatist impotence before the might and power of capitalism. The same applies to the attitude to war. A section of reformists and pacifists, who once repeated so blithely their claptrap of the League of Nations as the panacea to solve the problem of war, and now proclaim their disillusionment, believe they have advanced from reformist illusions to a profound "frankly revolutionary" outlook. Nothing of the kind. They are the same as they always were. They have only moved from one stage of imperialism to the next, in accordance with the development of imperialism. When the League of Nations was the instrument of imperialist stabilisation, when it was the reactionary instrument of the world domination of the victor Powers, when it was the open organ of the anti-Soviet crusade, then they gave their plaudits to the League as the angel of peace. But when to-day the main forces of imperialism, advancing to war, move to strike down the League, when the main Powers driving to war have passed out of the League, and when the Soviet Union from within the League fights to organise the front of the peoples opposed to war, then they proclaim their disillusionment with

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the League, and hasten, in exact harmony with their own Government, to write " finis " to collective security at the very moment when the collective peace front of the peoples could defeat fascist war. " Collective security has failed," proclaims the National Government (Neville Chamberlain on June 10). And the faithful followers reverently intone the response: " Let us honestly recognise that collective security and the collective system no longer exist." The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. Capitalism is all-powerful ; and if capitalism wishes war, war is inevitable.

" COLLECTIVE security is dead ? " *The Franco-Soviet Pact lives !* The People's Front in France has driven back the fascist reaction and stands united with the Soviet Union for peace. If we could do the same in Britain, if the criminal opposition to unity could be overcome, if we could combine a corresponding Anglo-Soviet Pact with the Franco-Soviet Pact, then we could build a front which could hold in check the fascist war offensive. This is well understood by the fascist and pro-fascist sections of imperialism. All their efforts are directed to destroy the Franco-Soviet Pact, and to emasculate the Covenant of the League on which it is based. If nothing else were clear, this fact alone would show the effective line of fight for the popular forces and for all supporters of peace. Now precisely, when the main assault of imperialism is directed against collective security, when the war danger is rising on all sides, is the time to carry forward the fight for collective security, for the collective peace front of the peoples, to its highest point. This is where the fight is needed, and not melancholy speculations on the failure of collective security, the impossibility of preventing war, or dreams of future " non-co-operation."

THE fight for peace is a mass fight, and the fight for collective security is a part of this mass fight. The conception that the peoples, at the present degree of development of forces, can by their unity and action prevent

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war, that they are not helpless pawns in the hands of imperialism, is a revolutionary conception. We who have never preached confidence in capitalist machinery, who have never had illusions in a capitalist League of Nations, with all the more confidence call the peoples to the fight by every means for peace against war, and call to the fight for the defence of the League Covenant at this moment as a vantage point in the struggle, as a focus for organising the peace forces, at this moment when the main warmaking, fascist and pro-fascist imperialist forces are delivering their onslaught upon it as an obstacle to their advance to war. Litvinov said of Article 16 in his speech to the League Assembly in July :

> I assert that Article 16 equipped the League of Nations with such powerful weapons that, in the event of their being fully applied, every aggression can be broken.

That statement remains true. Therefore the warmaking forces of imperialism advance to the attack on Article 16, at this moment when the People's Front in France, when the Soviet Union, when popular agitation throughout the world advances to the fight to make it a reality. For the same reason it is in the interest of the fight for peace to defend and maintain it against this attack. The League of Nations is no substitute for the mass struggle. But the mass struggle can utilise the forms of the League of Nations to organise the peace front, to concentrate the fight against the Governments that betray it (note the straw of the Derby by-election and the mass turnover to Noel Baker, one of the organisers of the World Peace Congress, as the champion of the League of Nations against the National Government, for the possibilities of the popular peace front in Britain), and so to build up the union of the popular forces that can check the fascist war offensive.

THE World Peace Congress has the task and the responsibility at this critical moment to rally the mass peace forces throughout the world to active struggle on a common programme against the concrete war offensive now developing. A stand needs to be made against the tendencies of confusion and weakening within sections of the peace movement at the

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moment of the intensifying of the war danger. The overwhelming majority of the peoples will support the fight for peace, if a clear lead is given—but not if the fight is presented as hopeless, not if collective security is presented as a lost cause, not if war is presented as inevitable ; then only demoralisation will follow and a rallying of each people to the support of its own imperialism in the name of "defence." United mobilisation of the people's front for peace in all countries is needed, on a world scale and a common world programme, against the fascist war offensive and the pro-fascist war elements within each country, and for the collective peace front. We need to combine all forces for this fight. The World Peace Congress is a first step—and a first step at a late hour—towards the realisation of this urgent aim.

R. P. D.

STOP PRESS on the
WORLD PEACE CONGRESS

To assist LABOUR MONTHLY readers in doing all they can to see that as many delegates as possible are sent from the organisations with which they are connected to the World Peace Congress which is being held in BRUSSELS from September 3rd—6th the following information has been summarised from the statements and publications of the organisers of this Congress in this country, the British National Committee of the INTERNATIONAL PEACE CAMPAIGN.

Delegations already organised to attend this Congress will come from the following countries: *America* :—Canada, United States, Mexico, Guatemala, Haiti, Chili, Argentine, and Paraguay. *Europe* :—Spain, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Yugo-Slavia, Bulgaria, Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the U.S.S.R. *Africa* :—South Africa and Egypt. *Asia* :—India and the Philippine Islands. *Australasia* :—Australia and New Zealand.

Some 45 delegates have up to the time of going to press been appointed from Britain.

In Britain some 86 organisations are co-operating in the Campaign, in addition to more than 20 different local Peace Councils, representing a great variety of bodies such as working-class, pacifist, youth, religious, co-operative, women's and professional organisations.

If they are not already active in the Campaign all readers are urged to get their organisations into touch with the Vice-Chairman of the British National Committee of the Campaign, Dame Adelaide Livingstone, 27 Chester Terrace, London, S.W.1. (Tel. Sloane 2300) for all information, leaflets and explanatory material on the Congress, also for their Weekly Bulletin, 1d. each. (*Maximum expenses per delegate—£5*).

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BRITISH LABOUR AND THE CONGRESS

By GEORGE HICKS, M.P.

EVERY effort must be made to bring about the effective mobilisation of all the forces aiming at the preservation of peace in the world, at the International Peace Congress at Brussels in September. That Congress should be the focal point of all immediate endeavours to safeguard the world from the crazy belligerency of the fascist countries—of which Nazi Germany is the most formidable and dangerous, and to establish the Union of People's Democracies, headed by Britain, Soviet Russia and France, which, with the International Working-class Movement as the central pillar of its power, can alone ensure peace and maintain it.

The fascist dogs of war, let loose, are howling. The world is in deadly peril. The whole future of humanity now depends upon the maintenance of Peace. Peace is the most important, the most vital, of all issues. Every other question is now subordinate to this one. Peace must be preserved at all costs. That is why every organisation of men and women—Pacifist, Religious, Trade Union, Co-operative and Political—struggling to overcome the danger of war, should participate in the International Peace Congress.

Make no mistake. Days are decisive at the present time. There must be an overwhelming gathering of the workers, the peoples, if a constructive policy of indivisible peace is to be realised. The old League of Nations is dead. It has been destroyed by the rival imperialisms, the economic nationalisms and the class greeds of the Capitalist Governments that composed it. But out of its remains must arise the League of Democratic Peoples, the body and soul of which must be provided by the international working-class.

The U.S.S.R., the People's Fronts in France and Spain, are standard bearers in this. But it is here, in Britain, that the most important movement in this direction must come. The supreme duty rests upon us in this country, especially upon the Labour Movement of this country, to isolate Fascism in Europe and to roll back the tide of War.

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WORLD TRADE UNIONISTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

By JOHN A. MAHON

THE unceasing development of fascist aggression is putting the question for or against war in a new way for many millions of people and many organisations. At a moment when the forces seeking war in all countries are giving their support to Fascism, the International Federation of Trade Unions held its ninth Triennial Conference in London. It declared against Fascism. It declared for Peace, but it did not declare unequivocally for the united front for peace. At the moment when the International of Christian Trade Unions found it possible to come out in support of the Brussels Peace Congress (Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix), the I.F.T.U. found it necessary to dissociate itself from that gathering.

Since it is impossible for the Peace Front to become the powerful force required to maintain peace if the trade unions remain out of it, it is a matter of deepest concern that the debate at the I.F.T.U. should be widely studied in order that both the ground for common action for peace, and the obstacles in the way, may be understood.

The question of peace and war was referred to in the President's address, came up in discussion on the Report of Activities, and on Leon Jouhaux's report on Item 5—Action against war, for disarmament and against Fascism. It also formed the background to the whole discussion on unity which occupied the major time of the Congress.

Sir Walter Citrine, K.B.E., in his Presidential address declared that in the three years that had passed since the Brussels Congress of the I.F.T.U., the international situation had worsened and the danger of war grown. " Infinitely more difficult and dangerous " was his description of the position. He pointed to Hitler and Mussolini as the aggressors and placed the responsibility for the present " humiliating " situation of the League on the shoulders of the leading powers who were divided in their attitude towards the fascist dictatorships.

Sir Walter then declared that the situation had outrun the Brussels decisions, the guiding principles of which now required restatement to meet the new conditions.

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We refresh our readers' memories by recalling the central point of the Brussels decisions—general strike by the working class movement of any country refusing to submit to the arbitration of the League and thereby making itself an aggressor.

Sir Walter went on to indicate the direction in which he thought the revision should take place :—

> To say that our Movement is opposed to war in all circumstances is, in my opinion, dangerously delusive and misleading . . . circumstances may arise in which we may find ourselves called upon to make war for the enforcement of peace and the maintenance of public law.

After this significant remark the President went on to restate the loyalty of the I.F.T.U. to the League of Nations and the collective system, and the need to strengthen and reinforce the League.

The Report of Activities dealt with the problem from the angle of recording the events which had taken place in the last three years, a melancholy record indeed, unrelieved by any attempt at trade union action, in advance of the governments.

Leon Jouhaux presented the question quite sharply in his speech. He said that the impotence of the League of Nations was also the impotence of the peoples, and of the trade unions. The I.F.T.U. had in theory (he should have said " words "—J.M.) done all that was required, but had they shown that they meant what they said ? Would it not have been better to have applied workers' sanctions when the governments took them off ?

He then stated that the peace opinion inside the International was frequently not united and not sufficiently alive to the fact that peace is indivisible.

He concluded by demanding the nationalisation of the arms industries ; together with support for governmental action to preserve peace, but trade union action when the governments were impotent.

The document presented by Jouhaux confined itself to outlining the same problems less sharply.

At this point in the discussion the Brussels decisions had three queries attached to them, one by Citrine, one, so to speak, in black type by Jouhaux, and an even larger one which History had already attached to them. These queries amounted to a cancellation of the Brussels policy and left the International wondering what its policy was.

This conclusion was drawn by Edo Fimmen, International Federation of Transport Workers, who advocated the replacement of the Brussels decisions by an open declaration that the International would advise its sections to fight for the preservation of what rights the Labour Movement had in the so-called democratic countries, to take up arms in the defence

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of those countries if Fascism attacked them, declaring at the same time that they were fighting not for their own capitalists but for themselves, and would not lay down their arms until they settled accounts at the end of the war.

All these speeches represented changes in the position of the I.F.T.U. it is true. But since the previous anti-war position of the I.F.T.U. was one of words—an edifice constructed after the war when peace was the prospect—we cannot understand the drift that is taking place unless we get to the root of the position. During the war the leaders of the I.F.T.U. broke up into national sections and lined up behind their capitalist governments. It is a fatal characteristic of the class collaboration wing in the Labour Movement that it has no faith, no understanding of the independent rôle of the working class ; it cannot conceive of sanity in politics unless it is hitched to the chariot of some government so that a great part of the tendency of these speeches was that of again moving into position behind the national governments in the line up against Fascism.

Such a policy is not adequate at this moment to maintain peace. We are not yet at war. It would be a fatal error to assume, as this policy does, that war is inevitable and the only thing left for Labour is to take arms under the national democratic flags against Fascism.

It was left to the Spanish delegation to make the clear statement of the real peace policy, through the mouth of Del Vayo, one of the closest collaborators of Largo Caballero in the leadership of the General Confederation of Labour and the Spanish revolutionary movement.

He had been chairman of the League Commission on the Chaco dispute, and therefore was not surprised by the League collapse over Abyssinia. He put on record that the weapons for Bolivia and Paraguay were supplied from countries with seats on the League Council.

It was not a question of reforming the Covenant, but reforming the behaviour of the governments who subscribed to the Covenant. Articles 10 and 16 would be sufficient if they were operated.

He declared that the indivisibility of peace also meant that neutrality was not possible. Forces which meant war and forces which meant peace must be treated dissimilarly. The security of the U.S.S.R. was essential to the maintenance of collective security, to the defence even of those very governments which had failed the League in the Abyssinian crisis.

All the forces of peace ought to be gathered together, as the Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix was seeking to do at the Peace Congress. The trade unions ought to support this Congress and to seek to develop an international European People's Front against war. Inside such a movement of the people, uniting all anti-war forces, the working class should play the guiding and directing rôle.

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This speech, cut short by the scandalous time table which left five minutes for such a contribution, saved the honour of the international trade union movement in this discussion. Applauded by the Spanish, French, Mexican and Norwegian delegations, the fighters for unity, it met with silence from the majority of the Congress.

But this speech and the support it got showed the emergence into the I.F.T.U. of the revolutionary working class fighting for its independent rôle, determined not to be dragged at the heels of capitalist governments, but to decide its own destiny. This tendency is quite different from Citrine's.

But there are some things in common which can be made the basis for agreement. Both agree that Fascism is the aggressor, that peace is indivisible. The disagreement shows itself on the question of the rôle of the working class, and it is not an accident that the line-up is here the same as on unity. At bottom Citrine regards the Communists as the great danger because they stand for a policy which would bring out the unions as fighters for the independence of the working class, would finish with the situation where the unions are harnessed to the capitalist governments. But Citrine is magnifying this fear of Communism ; he refuses to associate with the Brussels Peace Congress because the Communists will be there !

But the British trade unions have voted for unity with the Soviet trade unions in this very I.F.T.U. conference ! If they are ready to admit the " Russians " to the I.F.T.U. and ready to work with the " Russians " in the League of Nations and I.L.O., what is the point in refusing to co-operate in the International Peace Campaign ? Citrine has not the opinion of the unions behind him on this point.

It is now necessary that all those who stand for widest co-operation for peace take up seriously this question of the position of the I.F.T.U. Pressure from all sides of the Labour and progressive movement will have its effect. Above all the mass pressure of the trade union membership must be aroused. It was this which transformed the situation in France and Spain and gave those countries delegations which made such a magnificent stand at the I.F.T.U. Conference.

The Peace resolution that was adopted is quite colourless. At present the I.F.T.U. has no policy on the question of Peace or War. It must have one. British trade unionism holding the decisive balance between the reactionary anti-unity group of Sweden-Denmark-Holland-Czechoslovakia and the united advancing movements of France-Spain, can swing the I.F.T.U. into a peace policy that will also be a class policy, a unity policy.

The trade unions are necessary in the fight for peace. The trade union membership is for peace, but the trade union machine must be won for peace also.

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BRITISH PRO-FASCISTS AT MONTREUX

By GORE GRAHAM

THE Montreux Conference has provided the world with some interesting lessons on the whole international situation. It has been characterised by a conflict between the representatives of the British Government and the Soviet Union supported by France, Roumania and other States. In this conflict the Soviet Union has defended League principles of collective security, whilst Great Britain has put forward proposals which completely ignored the existence of the League Covenant or the Kellogg Pact. As the *Journal des Nations* (for July 19th) put it, there were at the Conference "two opposing theses, two conceptions of international right. The British thesis is based on the right of the pre-war period—the right of belligerent sides, war requirements, neutrality. The Soviet thesis is based on a new right—respect for the Covenant of the League of Nations." Once again it has been shown that whilst Baldwin talks about the League being the sheet anchor of British policy, his policy is one destructive of collective security. Luckily for peace the opposition to the British Government has been strong, and the withdrawal of the British proposals has enabled the conclusion of an agreement. Otherwise, so general was the opposition to the British representatives, the Conference would have reached no agreement at all.

The Conference arose out of Turkey's request for a revision of the Straits Convention reached at the Lausanne Conference in 1923. At the Lausanne Conference a victorious Turkey faced on equal terms Allied Powers which were divided and whose activities were harassed by war-weary populations. The Conference was thus on the whole a victory for the new Turkey, and in exchange for what little the Big Powers did save of the terms they had intended imposing on Turkey at the close of the world war they pledged themselves, with Japan, to resist by force any violation of the freedom of navigation and of the security of the demilitarised zones. To Turkey this virtually granted a territorial guarantee of her most exposed and most valuable territories, in return for which she gave restricted right of passage to warships. The U.S.S.R. did not sign or ratify the Convention and conformed to it only after an energetic protest, for the Convention admitted foreign warships into the Black Sea, with intention to be used, as they had been used, for war of intervention against the Soviet Union.

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Nevertheless this treaty, satisfactory as it was to the Turks at the time, represented a limitation of the sovereignty of Turkey. And when it became clear to Turkey how much the international situation had altered and how little respect there existed for international agreements, she decided to request a revision of the Convention. Seeing how Germany and other countries had turned international treaties into scraps of paper, and how obligations of collective security had been consistently ignored, there was nothing more reasonable than that Turkey should decide that the Convention, with its promise of protection by the Allied Powers and Japan, had grown to possess little substance. The signatories to the Convention included Japan and Italy, of whom the former has left the League and the latter just recently flouted it! When Turkey signed the Straits Convention, to be carried out under the auspices of the League of Nations, she believed that the League would become a real organisation for maintaining world peace. Events disillusioned her of that belief, and she began to ask herself what real guarantee there was of the inviolability of the Straits. She wanted to avoid the fate of Belgium in the World War. Although the Straits Convention recognised that Turkey had the right to take measures to prevent the passage of enemy naval and air craft, the Convention maintained the right of free passage for neutral warships and merchantmen, which precluded the closing of the Straits and made their defence impossible.

When the question was raised this spring there was no one who had anything to say against the revision. The U.S.S.R. and other States supported the request and the cautious spokesman of the British Government, *The Times*, could only add to its support a few portentous considerations. Yet last year, when the question was broached, after Hitler had scrapped the rearmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty, as well as when it was raised in 1934, the British Government was opposed to any revision. When the Conference opened at Montreux, however, there was general agreement with the Turkish request, and general approval of the nowadays unusual correctness of Turkey's procedure in requesting revision rather than simply kicking the Convention out of her way, *à la* Hitler. And it would have been easy for her to do so for Turkey could not be prevented from militarising the territories concerned except by a major operation like the Allied War of Occupation during 1914-18. Turkey was indeed the good boy of Europe.

Thus, on June 22, the opening day of the Conference, the press correspondents wrote that everything would be plain sailing and the Conference would reach an early conclusion. They were mistaken. The British Government had a good deal of Hitler up its sleeve.

* * * * *

The British Government approached the Conference with a great many more considerations in their minds than a simple one of revising

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the military clauses of the old Convention. And a factor which influenced it, as much as any other, but which was never expressed openly, was that anti-Soviet antagonism, which has long been a red thread running through British foreign policy, even though, lately, it may have become, in the general pattern of international relations, less distinctly observable. It was this which caused the British delegation's fight for the right of foreign warships to enter the Black Sea and against the proposal that the Soviet fleet should have the right to leave the Black Sea and proceed to the other distantly-situated coasts of the U.S.S.R. As the *Economist* writes:

> His Majesty's Government wish to retain the right to send as high a figure of non-riparian naval tonnage as possible into the Black Sea, while keeping down to a minimum the amount of naval tonnage the Russians will be at liberty to send out into the Mediterannean. This strongly suggests that the Government contemplate a necessity to fight in some war of the future on the opposite side to Russia.—(July 11, 1936.)

The Soviet view about the Black Sea summarised as follows, must strike any normal intelligence as completely rational. It is that the Black Sea is a closed sea; it leads nowhere; and the other Powers have no vital interests in it. In these days when war is not declared but begun without warning the security of the Black Sea demands that the strength of the naval forces entering it should be strictly limited. They have nothing to seek there, and if they want to pay courtesy calls they should be content with sending a small force and staying for a short time. On the other hand, the Soviet Union cannot expect to be bottled up in the Black Sea, excluded from the Seven Seas and from her distant ports in the Baltic and Pacific. The principle of free egress for Russia and restricted ingress for others was, in fact, contained in the Lausanne Treaty.

The Soviet delegation contended that in time of war belligerent States should only be allowed to send their warships through the Straits from either side *in pursuit of their duties under the League Covenant.*

The British view was widely opposed to all this. All mention of the League and the Covenant was absent from the British proposals. Is it that the British Government no longer takes the League into account, asked the *Manchester Guardian* for July 8th, in an article which concluded: "Of all the suggestions made so far one must prefer that of M. Litvinov to that of Lord Stanhope." The British proposals introduced an entirely new principle. They claimed that so long as Turkey is neutral, belligerent Powers should have complete freedom of transit through the Straits. What was the meaning of this? *That both Japan and Germany could send their fleets into the Black Sea in case of war against the U.S.S.R.*

Once again the British Government was found playing the rôle of advocate and protector of Germany and Japan. Hitler could have said of Lord Stanhope at Montreux, as the Japanese said of Sir John Simon at

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Geneva, that he could not have put forward a better case himself. The excuse given for the British Government's pro-Hitler policy was that unless the Conference considered the views of States absent from the Montreux Conference and not in the League—particularly Germany—the result would be complications and armament rivalry elsewhere. The suggestion that Germany could have demanded a revision of the Anglo-German naval agreement if the anti-Soviet proposals of Britain were not adopted was patently ridiculous, as any examination either of the tonnage proposals at the Montreux Conference or of the terms of the Anglo-German agreement itself reveals at once. But even if it were reasonable it would still be no argument unless every step that is taken is going to be determined by whether the Hitlers and Mussolinis approve or not. In any case, there was much in the *Manchester Guardian's* suggestion that it was the British that gave the Nazis the idea of making their threat.

The extent to which the British Government adopted a pro-fascist line in opposition to the Soviet Union's stand on League principles certainly aroused general amazement amongst all Liberal and League opinion. An instance of their indefatigability is given in the fact that the British delegation's first view was that all belligerents should have complete passage through the Straits, which gave everyone a clear picture of German and Japanese fleets making a combined attack on the Soviet Black Sea coasts. When this was strongly opposed the British shifted their ground and suggested that discretion should be left to Turkey to open or close the Straits to all belligerents equally. This proposal, based on a peculiar idea of international agreement (!), was also violently opposed and particularly by countries like Roumania. For everyone recognised it as an obvious manœuvre to split the countries of the Balkan Pact. Little wonder the Liberal press declared that the little which could be comprehended of the British standpoint was not particularly praiseworthy.

Then came the arguments about the obligations under the League Covenant. The proposal put forward by the U.S.S.R., France and others, was that the States acting under League obligations should have passage in and out of the Straits, which obligations should include those involved in agreements concluded within the League system, such as the mutual assistance Pacts like the Locarno or the Franco-Soviet Pact and so on. Again the innocents were shocked by the British Government's attitude. It argued that the various Pacts were not within the League. In short, the British Government, which on previous occasions had rightly dismissed the German complaints against the Franco-Soviet Pact, began to use precisely those arguments against it which Hitler used to justify his scrapping of Locarno and the march into the Rhine. As everyone realised, such arguments flew in the face of obvious facts. The Franco-Soviet

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Pact is an agreement in which two League States undertake to do that which they are obliged to do under the League Covenant, but to do it jointly on their own if lack of unanimity of the League Council or other obstacles should stand in the way of their carrying out their League obligations. It had only been Hitler who had previously dared to use the arguments mentioned against this Pact. Now the British Government came forward; the accents were the accents of Stanhope, but the arguments were the arguments of Hitler.

Again in their determined pro-Hitler struggle against League principles, the British Government fought for the right for foreign warships to enter the Black Sea for "humanitarian reasons." But again the reception was not good, and everyone began to ask what were those "humane ends" which were envisaged as reasons for warships to advance on Soviet Black Sea coasts. Were they such humane ends as the granting of assistance to the "poor Ukrainians" whom Hitler, as the whole world knows, has set his heart on succouring?

As we go to press the concluded Convention has not been published, but the British have had to climb down and League principles and the cause of collective peace have prevailed over the completely reactionary, anti-League and anti-Soviet struggle which the British Government put up. *The Times* for July 17th writes, "The British delegation has had to concede many, if not most, of its contentions," for which fact, due to the remarkable work of the representatives of the great peace State, the U.S.S.R., all those anxious for world peace cannot be too thankful.

The Conference has revealed once again how the Soviet Union is to-day the greatest force for world peace, the most tireless fighter for the organisation of collective security against the forces of War, that exists. Once more the millions of peace-lovers throughout the world are indebted to the Soviet Union for another great service it has rendered in the struggle for peace.

The Conference has also revealed to the world the fact that the present British Government is one of the greatest liabilities which burdens the cause of world peace to-day. These events at this Conference at Montreux, however, should strengthen the working class and peace movements in Britain in their determination to see that the impending removal of Baldwin is followed not by some more dangerous Government of British imperialists, but by a real Labour Peace Government which will put an end to the incendiarism of the present foreign policy of Great Britain and will place the forces of this country alongside those of the U.S.S.R. and France and other States for the strengthening of the world peace front.

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FOR PEACE OR FOR HITLER?

By CLEMENS DUTT

THE breakdown of existing treaties and agreements for settling international conflicts, the collapse of the League of Nations as an instrument for the preservation of peace and defeat of an aggressor, the feverish piling up of armaments, and the increasingly aggressive character of fascism, are all signs of the general headlong course towards a new world war that is now the outstanding feature of the international situation. The dominating character of the war menace finds a reflection also in the heightened activity of the peace movement. The elusive blessing of peace is being sought after in the most varied directions and by the most varied policies.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that although the near approach to war has meant an increased activity of the peace movement, the latter has not yet exercised an effective influence in stemming the tide towards war. Rather the approach to war has multiplied the division among the peace forces. It has been demonstrated that support for the cause of peace in the abstract is very easy and commands universal approval, but that in proportion as the war issues become more acute they also become more complicated, spreading dissension and confusion among the ranks of those who would champion the cause of peace.

The out-and-out pacifist preaches individual non-resistance to all war. He either ignores altogether the political factors that are making for war, or supports opinions and policies quite irrespective of his principle of non-resistance. Another form of pacifism adopts the egoistic line of declaring that as long as the frontiers of one's own country or possessions are not threatened no regard need be paid to the plans of aggression of other countries. A third variety of pacifism preaches reliance on existing governmental machinery for the preservation of peace and discountenances any independent struggle for peace on the part of the masses of the people. All these pacifist tendencies can prove extremely dangerous in the actually existing situation, but perhaps the most dangerous form of pacifism is that which declares in effect that peace can best be preserved by making friends with the strongest and most aggressive power and giving way to its demands.

This policy, which in its practical effect has many points of resemblance with that usually attributed to Ethelred the Unready in the earlier history

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of England, finds defenders among very large sections of the peace movements in this country and may or may not be combined with the ethic of non-resistance. At the recent conference of the National Union of Railwaymen, the existence of this tendency was very correctly and sharply raised into prominence in the speech of Edo Fimmen, the Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, who declared:

> The war danger was never more imminent than at this moment. Do not believe, as many people in Britain do believe, that just by meeting the wishes of fascist dictators you can escape war. You cannot tame a wild beast by flinging it a piece of sugar. I fear that to-day the greatest danger to peace and at the same time the greatest help to fascist dictators is a misunderstood pacifism in many countries, including your own, especially among the workers. (*Daily Herald*, July 8, 1936.)

It is the intention of this article to call attention to some prominent expressions of this policy that are to be found pervading numerous peace utterances and peace conferences recently held.

A typical example of the way in which the policy of pure pacifism can play into the hands of the warmongers is to be found in a pamphlet by Aldous Huxley entitled "What are you going to do about it?" which purports to set out the case for "constructive peace." The author admits that "non-violent resistance cannot be used to any considerable extent in modern war," and therefore he says "the practical task before pacifists in this country is to persuade the government to act pacifistically towards other governments." In setting out his pacifist solution he expounds the now rather familiar thesis that the three big fascist powers are suffering from a sense of grievance for which the "injustice" done to them by the Versailles Treaty is responsible. He says:

> Germany, Italy and Japan are three countries whose position in the post-war world is fundamentally similar. All suffer from a sense of grievance—of grievance, moreover, which the existing circumstances of the world very largely justify.

Like a number of other people, Mr. Aldous Huxley makes a rather belated discovery of the injustice of the Versailles Treaty. He says:

> The peace of Versailles was . . . economically a thoroughly bad peace. The peoples of three great countries feel that they have been and are being treated unjustly. And so intense is this feeling, so painful is the process of gradual and steady impoverishment to which they are being subjected that for great masses of these people war seems preferable to peace, as they know it to-day.

We can leave aside the question whether the impoverishment of the people in these countries (including Japan!) is due to the Versailles Treaty and not rather to the fascist régime to which they are subjected, but it is a little remarkable to find that Mr. Huxley finds it possible to put all the blame for the approach of war, not on the fascist governments which are actually conducting war or openly preparing for aggression but on

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the other powers that do not give way to their demands. He says of these other powers that " they hope by this threatening display of force to frighten the unsatisfied powers into renouncing their claims for justice." Japan's occupation of Manchuria and North China and fascist Italy's bloody onslaught against the Abyssinian people are presumably to be described as " claims for justice ! "

The plea for " justice for Germany," in the form in which it is now made, was little heard of before the arrival of Hitler. Democratic, defenceless Germany was hardly considered a suitable object for justice. It is noticeable that the propaganda of " justice for Germany " that has come into prominence during the last year or so has often been a cover for advancing anti-Soviet propaganda. It is characteristic that in this respect also Aldous Huxley agrees with the views of many reactionaries who stand for an Anglo-German pact. He goes out of his way to decry Russia as

> an elaborately hierarchical society, ruled by a small group of men who are ready to employ the extremes of physical and economical coercion against those who disagree with their views ; a society in which . . . the exclusive and ultimately bellicose spirit of nationalism is growing in intensity.

He condemns Russia because there " the principle of coercion . . . is still ruthlessly applied," and because it " possesses the largest army in the world and . . . countries which possess and are proud of large armies almost invariably end by making use of them against their neighbours." He utters no word against fascist Germany or Italy on these grounds.

What is the practical solution put forward by " constructive pacifism " ? It is very simple and consists in making concessions to the demands put forward by the controllers of the fascist states. He says :

> The great monopolistic powers (meaning Britain, U.S.A., France and the U.S.S.R.) should immediately summon a conference at which the unsatisfied powers, great and small, should be invited to state their grievance and claims. When this has been done it would be possible . . . to work out a scheme of territorial, economic and monetary readjustments for the benefit of all.

It is unnecessary to criticise here the now familiar proposal for redistributing the colonies and mandated territories by means of an international conference, a proposal which only reflects the growing fierceness of the conflict between the rival imperialist powers for a re-division of colonial possessions. It may be worth noting, however, that Huxley puts it forward not merely as a method for preserving peace, but also as a solution of the general problems that owe their origin to the existence of rival capitalisms. He calls upon constructive pacifists to " persuade the government " to call " at the earliest possible date a conference for the discussion of the economic and political causes of war and the elaboration of a world-wide scheme for eliminating those causes." Since the cause of war is capitalism, this practical policy, therefore, demands not only

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a new world peace conference in which the *victors* shall be the fascist states, but a conference in which the rival imperialisms—including those innocent lambs the highly reactionary, aggressive, imperialist governments of Germany, Italy and Japan—will transform their essential nature by mutual agreement.

It would not be worth spending so much space on this pamphlet of Aldous Huxley's if it were not for the fact that he expresses crudely arguments that in an open or disguised form keep cropping up at peace conferences and in the peace movement generally.

A special place is taken by the International Peace Congress which met in Cardiff during June. This Congress, at which 22 nations were represented, opened with a message from the King and a speech by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. Its resolution on the re-occupation of the Rhineland, which was agreed to with one dissentient, declares that the Locarno Treaty has been violated, but continues :

> believing that a Franco-German Agreement was essential to the peace of Europe, urged that immediate steps should be taken to bring this about. To this end they welcomed the efforts of Great Britain and expressed the hope that Herr Hitler's reply to the British overtures might be such as to form a basis for successful negotiations. (*Times*, June 20, 1936.)

The resolution concluded with a declaration that the inclusion of Germany in the League of Nations on a footing of complete equality was a fundamental consummation of the foregoing recommendations. This " peace " congress " welcomed the efforts of Great Britain " and in effect expressed its approval of British policy as far as Germany is concerned.

Later in June the National Peace Congress was held at Leeds. This Congress assembled representatives from some 300 peace organisations, giving expression to very diverse points of view. It was noticeable that this year the general character of the opinions expressed had moved away from abstract and religious pacifist positions to a definitely political and in many respects left attitude, and the final resolution adopted contained only a vague formulation of the hitherto prominent advocacy of a redistribution of colonies and mandates, and even contained a point declaring " opposition to fascism and nazism."

Nevertheless, some very clear and illuminating expressions of the pro-Hitler standpoint were put forward. One of the chief of these was a long speech by Lord Lothian in which after excusing the invasion of Abyssinia on the grounds of Italy's need for expansion, he said :

> Now that Japan had found her outlet in China . . . and that Italy had found her outlet in Abyssinia, there was only one question left which might disturb the peace of the world, the German question. If that could be solved peacefully they could feel assured of 25 years' peace. There was still justice to be done to Germany, and by some readjustment in Eastern Europe—say in Austria and Danzig—and by giving her openings

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> in the economic field overseas. But they had got to make concessions to Germany because they were just, not because they were extorted at the point of the sword or the bomb. (*Times*, June 27, 1936.)

It is a little remarkable to find such openly pro-fascist propaganda put forward so prominently at a peace conference. Lord Lothian applauds Japanese aggression in China and Italy's seizure of Abyssinia as a contribution to peace and says that it only requires that Germany should go and do likewise to obtain her outlet (he suggests Austria, but presumably would not object on principle to the Ukraine) for Hitler's promised fortieth of a millenium of peace to be brought about. It is interesting that he mentions precisely the 25 years of peace promised by Hitler so as to show clearly the source of his inspiration. A more appropriate place for his utterances was the Anglo-German Dinner given on July 14 at which Lord Lothian was also one of the main speakers and again pointed to the " opportunity which, if it was seized, might give the world the 25 years of peace of which Herr Hitler spoke last March."

Another notable expression of the pro-fascist view at the Leeds Peace Congress was that of Sir George Paish, former financial adviser to the Treasury. Sir George let the cat out of the bag. His concern was not so much for the peace of the world, but for preventing a revolution which would sweep away the fascist dictatorships. He was quite frank about it. The *Daily Herald* (June 29, 1936), reports him as saying :

> Italy and Germany were on the brink of revolution and to avert this he urged that Germany must get back her colonies and Italy be allowed to expand. . . . Distress in Germany is likely to bring revolution and unless we stop it it will spread to other places. We should say to Germany, " We shall give you back your colonies on condition that you come back into the League, and stand with us in a policy of peace."

It may be urged that these are isolated views and are not representative of the peace movement in Britain as a whole. This is probably true, but it does not in any way decrease the danger of this considerable volume of propaganda which undoubtedly influences important sections of the peace forces in this country.

One of the prominent advocates of rapprochement with Germany is Lord Ponsonby. It is an indication how closely the support of Hitler fascism's plans of aggression are linked up with the destruction of collective security and emasculation of the League that Lord Ponsonby can write to the *Times* (June 25, 1936), declaring :

> If the true lesson is learned, the elimination of the element of force from the Covenant of the League will be the means of strengthening the League's authority, restoring and perhaps completing its membership and avoiding another deplorable failure in future.

An interesting point to notice is that not only Lord Ponsonby but also Aldous Huxley are prominently associated with the religious Peace Pledge

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Movement, inaugurated by Canon Sheppard, which already claims 100,000 signatures and includes among its leading members George Lansbury and Ellen Wilkinson.

Thus we see support for the claims of the fascist dictatorships going hand in hand with the advocacy of non-resistance to war. The pro-fascist policy represents one strand that runs through the whole pacifist movement from the extreme non-resistance pacifists to the most respectable, government-reformist peace advocates. The result is a wide measure of support for British Imperialism on the central issue of British foreign policy.

It is precisely the issue of the relation to Hitler fascism that is the key question of British foreign policy at the present time. The dominant section of the British bourgeoisie has all along encouraged and assisted Hitler. The abandonment of sanctions against Italy is closely linked up with the pro-Hitler line, so persistently voiced by the *Times*, the line for an agreement with Germany, the reform (really destruction) of the League of Nations, the inclusion of Germany in an emasculated League, the abandonment of collective security, the acceptance of Hitler's proposals for localising war with a free hand for Germany in the East, the return to bi-lateral military alliances, etc. A big advance along this road has been made by British Imperialism during recent months, although the British Government dare not yet advocate a full alliance with Hitler. At the same time it refuses to commit itself to support of the small states threatened by Hitler fascism. It is precisely this uncertainty as to the eventual action of Britain which encourages Hitler to gamble on British toleration of his aggressive designs, just as Italy successfully gambled on the sabotage of the League of Nations, and thus directly leads to war.

The abandonment of sanctions against Italy has raised a storm of protest in the Labour Movement and among peace forces in England. But this campaign is not only belated but is not directed against the greatest menace of all, the pro-Hitler policy of British Imperialism which brings with it the chief danger of war. On the contrary both the peace movement and the Labour Movement contain many elements which not merely ignore the threat to peace represented by German fascism, but give every encouragement to Hitler's designs and British support of them.

Support of peace in the abstract, as we have seen, only too easily takes the form of non-resistance to the actual forces driving towards war and even of support of the war policy of British Imperialism. That the present situation is a pre-war situation in which the atmosphere is more highly charged with the danger of war than even in 1914 is now widely recognised but the campaign for peace in general, instead of against the concrete danger of war, is likely to be as ineffective as in 1914.

There is a wide and developing campaign in England in support of peace. The preservation of peace depends in the first place on the united,

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international mass pressure of the peoples in all countries. The demand for peace found expression in England last year in the millions voting in the Peace Ballot. The co-ordination of the peace forces has advanced a further step by the development of the International Peace Campaign under the initiative of Viscount Cecil in this country. This campaign has behind it the majority of working-class and peace forces in this country, and on an international scale it brings together for the first time the mass peace forces represented by working class, co-operative, intellectual, pacifist and religious organisations.

At the present moment the central place in the fight for peace is taken by the preparations for the World Peace Congress to be held in September. The great campaign against the danger of war which should mark the twenty-second anniversary of the outbreak of the last world war will lose much of its value unless it is characterised by efforts to mobilise all possible forces for the election of delegates to this Congress.

But it is not enough to bring together in one channel the mass forces that are united in their determination to prevent a new world war. If the campaign for peace is to be effective it must not be an abstract isolated affair, a detached subsidiary activity separate from the political movement and struggle of the great mass of the people. On the contrary, if the fight for the preservation of peace is to be successful it must be a living political issue, a fight directed to combating the concrete dangers of the menacing fascist war offensive, following also every step taken by British imperialism and fighting against the actual pro-Hitler war policy of the National Government.

The danger of an abstract defence of peace and concrete support of fascism is not absent also from the international peace campaign. As a characteristic example may be cited the statement in Australia of Bishop Goulbourn, the head of the committee there for the World Peace Congress. He declared in Sydney (May 5, 1936), that "war is as inevitable as sunrise to-morrow unless justice is done to nations like Italy, Germany and Japan." Such views, as we have seen, can be paralleled on all sides in Great Britain.

It is necessary to emphasise that the injustice done by the Versailles Treaty to the *people* of democratic Germany cannot be atoned for by concessions to the *fascist dictators* of Nazi Germany. Concessions to the aggressive lust of fascism do not prevent war but only stave off the internal revolt of the population under the fascist jackboot, as Sir George Paish admitted. The only way in which war can be prevented is by the united international mass action of the peoples to defend the instruments of peace against the attempts to destroy them, to defeat the actual plans of war and aggression on the part of the fascist dictatorships and to counter and defeat the actual war-making policy of the imperialist governments.

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PROBLEMS OF LABOUR POLICY

[*At the beginning of this year in view of the many issues arising out of the General Election in relation to the future of Labour policy the* LABOUR MONTHLY *decided to invite Labour M.P.s, Labour Candidates and others active in the Labour Movement to contribute their views. The following is a further series of replies to this invitation : the names of previous contributors will be found at the conclusion.*]

I.

By G. R. STRAUSS, M.P., L.C.C.

THE most urgent problem facing Socialists to-day is how to vitalise the immense reserve of political energy and power that is now lying dormant in the Labour movement.

For a variety of reasons the spirit of the rank and file of the Labour Party is at present subdued. Among the influences which are enervating the ordinary party member are the difficulties of foreign policy, the uninspiring leadership, the lingering disappointment of the last election, and the long interval that must elapse before the battle of a new one. Under normal conditions, such a temporary lack of militancy might not matter, but now, when time is so desperately short, when the danger of war and of fascism is growing daily more menacing, it is threatening the very existence of the British Working-Class Movement.

The difficulty is not that the Labour Party is weak, either in numbers or in spirit. The keenness and ability of its members is probably as fine to-day as ever in the past. The Labour Party is immensely strong, but it is the strength of the drugged giant, and the immediate problem is how, before it is too late, it can throw off its drowsiness, so that it may wield its giant's influence in the fateful struggles that lie before us. How is it to be stirred into action ?

There are already signs that it is returning to life. The victory of the Popular Front in France and Spain has had a keenly stimulating effect on the best workers in the party. It has quickened their blood and given them fresh hope that the Labour Movement to which they have devoted so much of their time, energy and money may yet, in spite of the disappointments of the past ten years, achieve a similar triumph in this country.

It is evident that nothing short of a dramatic reorientation of policy within the party can make this revivalism permeate the movement as a

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whole, and it is equally evident that the first step in this direction must be the formation of a United Front in England. But it would of course be absurd to embark on this important new policy merely to arouse a temporary enthusiasm, without a most careful study of all the implications involved, the practical difficulties that lie in its way, as well as its long term effects on Socialist politics.

One must admit that the difficulties of achieving a successful United Front (by which I mean a broad agreement among all left movements to unite behind a short, clear and precise programme of immediate action), are by no means negligible. To start with, as it is evident that the Labour leadership will oppose any co-operation with the Communist Party, the rank and file must develop sufficient pressure to force the leadership in the required direction. In many local parties there still lingers a bitter feeling from the communist attacks of the past. The appellation of "social-fascist," which not long ago was hurled at us at every public meeting, still rankles. This very natural resentment is, however, melting away, and the speed with which it will disappear completely depends on the ability of the Communist Party to bring about not only a change of tactics, but a real change of heart among its members, locally as well as nationally, and on the readiness of the local Labour organisations to forget the pinpricks of the past in face of the urgency of the present. For it is absolutely essential that neither side should regard the move for affiliation as a mere "manœuvre."

There is fortunately every indication that both parties appreciate the necessity of this mutual readjustment. For necessity indeed it is—the Communist Party can't afford to remain any longer an isolated body, battling with the mass socialist party as well as the capitalist parties, and the Labour Party can't afford to forego the influx of fighting enthusiasm contained in the Communist ranks.

The next difficulty will be the selection of points for the immediate programme of action. This will be of supreme importance, as it will depend on the appeal of this programme rather than on the mere adjustment of party relationships, whether the United Front will be able to rally mass support behind it. Neither party must be asked to compromise one particle of its political philosophy. Nor will it be necessary for them to do so. A selection of the most pressing items in their present policy, and their restatement to meet the exigencies of the political situation to-day is all that is needed. But unless the move for affiliation is followed by such a statement of aim, its possibilities for good will be gravely diminished.

It would surely be by no means an insuperable task to formulate a short programme, capable of attracting the support of all the left opinion in the country. One of its main provisions must certainly be the nationalisation of the armament industry, and a clear-cut foreign policy to be pursued

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through the League of Nations in co-operation with the other peace-loving democracies of the world, as a condition of participation in the rearmament of the country.

At the appropriate time an appeal must be made to the numerous radical elements in the country, whether organised in the Liberal Party or not, to rally behind this programme. One of the arguments used by opponents of the United Front is that it would result in frightening away potential middle-class allies, and rendering their future co-operation impossible. I believe this argument to be entirely fallacious, and that, in fact, a United Front would have the exact opposite effect. There is to-day deep dissatisfaction with the National Government among large sections of the community who are normally without political attachments. They feel instinctively that this Government has betrayed the peace interests of the country, and that its policy will lead us headlong into war. But at present they can find no alternative political force that commands their support. The Communist Party, as such, associated in their minds with the idea of violence, is out of the question. The Labour Party seems to speak with many voices, and appears to them in view of its past history, to be almost as ineffective as the Liberal Party. Consequently, their fear of the National Government, which is up to now entirely dissipated, might, if mobilised and properly directed, develop into an irresistible force. But if there was a virile and popular alternative to the National Government, this opposition would be attracted to it, and the combined strength of all anti-government opinion, organised into one effective body speaking with one voice, would transform the political situation. Such an alternative would, I believe, have behind it sufficient support from all sections of the population to force a change of policy on the Government, and at the earliest opportunity, to achieve a sweeping victory at the polls.

It will be remembered that on two recent occasions temporary united fronts were formed, which effectively coerced the Government, in spite of its vast Parliamentary majority. I refer to the first Unemployment Assistance Board regulations and to the Hoare-Laval proposals. When these two spontaneous movements had achieved their immediate purpose, they were allowed to disintegrate. The international situation makes it imperative that such a movement should become a permanent feature of our political life.

There is another point worthy of consideration in this connection. Experience shows that political parties have in the past been alive to the importance of adapting the appeal of their names to the changed circumstances of the time. The Conservatives have fully recognised this by frequent alterations from " Tory " to " Unionist," " Conservative," and now " National." In municipal politics they usually call themselves

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something quite different, such as " Municipal Reformers," or " Ratepayers' Association." But the left parties, mainly through reasons of pardonable pride, have preferred to maintain their old nomenclatures. And they are suffering from it to-day.

No party, however perfect it may be, can exist long without leaving in its wake a trail of mistakes and failures, and it is the constant endeavour of its opponents to see that these are more prominent in the public mind than its successes and triumphs. The parties composing a United Front would of course retain their individual names, as do the parties composing the National Government. But, in the same way as the adoption of the word " National " was a potent factor in enabling the old parties to obtain power in 1931 and 1935 (how differently they would have fared if they had still called themselves Conservatives and Liberals !) so, in even greater degree, the erection of a common banner for the left movements of the Country, inscribed with the name " United Front," with all its inspiring associations in current European history, would in itself have a profound effect on the spirit of those movements.

The most recent example of the power of a United Front was the Derby bye-election, where, in spite of the fact that unemployment is only 4 per cent., and a large part of the population is in steady employment in the manufacture of armaments, there was a turnover in favour of the Labour candidate of over 7,000 votes. This dramatic result would not have been achieved without the existence of an embryonic United Front, formed by the active participation of both Communists and Liberals in the campaign. But at Derby, as in other parts of the country, the left is still in the main able to gain mass support only as a negative force. Those who vote for it are moved more by distrust in the Government than by confidence in the opposition. It will be the mission of the United Front (and, if it does not do this, it will fail) to transform the left from a negative force into a positive one. It must put before the country with dynamic energy an alternative policy that people will turn to with enthusiasm, not just because they are fed-up with the " National " Government, but because they are convinced that here is a strong and capable movement with a wise, common-sense programme that shows the way to the preservation of peace and the solution of our social ills.

In weighing the advantages and the risks involved in forming a United Front, one must also consider what the position will be if we carry on as at present. Is the Labour Party to wait patiently for a possible majority at an election in four years time, meanwhile playing the rôle of an impotent opposition to a Government that is likely, long before that election comes, to plunge us into a war ? Is it to refuse, on account of formulas and orthodoxy, the willing aid of allies on the left and on the right, and further weaken itself by wasting its energy in fighting them as well as the real

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enemy ? In these critical times, is its policy really to be the minimum of friends and the maximum of opponents ?

Surely the rank and file of the party, once they realise these alternatives, will not be prepared to stand for this policy of folly and despair. The pressure for the establishment of a United Front is yet young : but it is growing quickly and vigorously. No time must be wasted in making it irresistible.

II.

By TOM REGAN

(*Member, Manchester City Council*).

THE problems confronting the Labour Movement at the present time are how to obtain (1) An unfettered daily press ; (2) Strict discipline for leaders ; (3) Political dictatorship of political policy ; (4) Modern literature and posters ; (5) Proof of patriotism ; (6) Non-abuse of national conferences ; (7) a United front.

The problem of the unfettered daily workers' press to me is a big one. If we leave out the *Daily Worker*, which does not meet with the wishes (according to circulation) of the masses of the workers and is not likely to reach even the circulation of the old *Daily Herald*, we cannot say that we have a daily that can " speak its mind." The present *Daily Herald* is thwarted in its efforts to be thoroughly outspoken because of its dependance upon advertisements. The complete absence from its columns of any propagation of the Co-operative Movement is conspicuous. Agitation at council meetings for municipalisation is barely reported. Articles are determined by " sales " ; such a series as those entitled " In the steps of St. Paul " could very well have been replaced by " In the steps of Willy Paul." This paragraph is not an attempt to decrease the sales of the *Herald*, as, imperfect as it is, we must support it until we get a better. What a different paper and movement we would have if the *Herald* was as free as *Reynolds* now is, and acts.

What is lacking a great deal in our Labour Movement is a strict discipline for our representatives. As a believer in a mass party in which we must not be too strict with the rank and file (who cannot fully practice the Socialist doctrine because of economic pressure) I am all for the strictest discipline for the leaders. The discipline and intelligence called for in the Sinn Fein movement in its leaders had a very great effect upon its results. Although not providing a Workers' Ireland, it did compel the Government of the day to give way. In the Labour Movement to-day the leaders can be pacifist-warmongers ; monarchical-socialists ; masonic-democrats ; " honoured " by the enemy, etc. ; all

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of which confuses the man-in-the-street, who cannot understand the contradictions.

How to control the movement from the political angle instead of from the trade unions has puzzled many comrades for many years. The block or card vote at the National Conference has been their nightmare. I feel that we are all thankful to the trade union movement for what it has done for the Labour Movement, but its outlook is not exactly like the political outlook, one dominant example being with regard to war or peace. Many trade union leaders must view peace from the angle of how many of their members are working on munitions. The political movement is not hampered by this because it can provide the production of useful commodities to replace munition production. Now as never before, the Labour Movement has the chance of making itself entirely independent by developing its individual membership section. In my own area, the Gorton division, we had 3,000 paying members at the end of 1935, and the canvass is again proceeding and 100 members were enrolled at the last monthly meeting.

How to get home our propaganda easily and cheaply is a problem for us. As a visitor to Russia on the first workers' delegation in 1927 one thing that struck me very forcibly was the advanced method of literature advertisements used by these then "ignorant" comrades; practically all the news-print was abolished in the poster or leaflet, and a graph or pictures of varying sizes, were introduced with a few explanatory words. The chief poster I remember was one with a few stepped lines up showing the increase in wages per year and then a few stepped lines down showing the decrease in hours of work during the same period. The whole of Kharkov saw that poster on one day, the tenth anniversary of the revolution. We in our movement still pack our literature with journalese, and the reader loses the pith of the article.

A very urgent problem of the moment is how to persuade the unconverted worker that this country of ours will be safe in the hands of the Labour Movement. Unfortunately it is easy for our enemies through their press and their power to employ him to make him believe that it will not be safe in our hands. The urgency of this problem is proved by the present prolific agitation and propagation of fascism in the working-class districts. The fascists here use the monarchy for their ends, although it plays a second place in Italy and no place at all in Germany. The point they make most of is that the Labour Movement is anti-British because of its international outlook. To combat this I would suggest that we make a very great display in all our propaganda and literature of the following slogan: *Your Comrade and Country Need You!* This has the advantage of being attractive, has a definite working-class appeal, and is true.

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Some method must be found to stop the abuse of the time of Labour Party Conferences by the enemy. The spending of a day-and-a-half of last year's Conference on the Abyssinian affair and the almost total absence of discussion on the Unemployed was undoubtedly in my opinion a penalty we paid for allowing our leaders to spend their time in the enemy's clubs and to receive their decorations. The mixing in the social atmosphere of the enemy gives an opportunity for the enemy to " work up " our leaders to such an extent that they will bring up, and concentrate upon, at the Annual Conference matters which even though of some importance are not the most important, certainly not as important as unemployment, malnutrition, maternal mortality, the 40-hours week, etc. With all the abuse of our last Conference's time for the League of Nations, Abyssinia has been annihilated, and not one of those who helped in that abuse have advocated or joined any Abyssinian Foreign Legion to help them expel the aggressor who, in their opinion, at the Conference was a bigger enemy to us than the British capitalist.

Running through all the articles to the MONTHLY has been the desire for a United Font. No comrade has suggested how it is to be done. We are all just supposed to come together. The suggestion I have to make will probably not meet with much support from future contributors to this series, but it is based upon my belief in a *Mass Workers' Party*. As one who has always tried to apply a militant working-class outlook and action to all matters, even though at times I have been opposed by my own comrades, I regret more than anybody those militant comrades of mine who are wasting most of their militancy outside the Labour Party. Their absence from the Labour Party is definitely the cause of the extreme right outlook of the Party to-day. Such militant working-class comrades who are not working with us in the Party to-day are working in small numbers which are not attracting the great field of militant youth that appears every year. They are not getting them ; the Labour Party is not getting them. You ask any Labour agent at election times and he will tell you that he cannot get the hard, militant, energetic workers now that he used to get, although his party membership is higher.

Where are these youths going ? If we do not put our working-class house in order they will take account of this dissipation of their energies and join up with the British Union of Fascists. My suggestion is that the Communist Party, the I.L.P., and the Socialist League shall go into " voluntary liquidation " and all comrades shall become members of the individual section of the Labour Party. " Ah," my comrades will say, " they got United Fronts on the Continent, why cannot we do it the same way here ? " The reason is that we have only parties in name here, on the Continent they are parties in name and numbers. The membership of the different parties on the Continent are much more

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equal in numbers than ours. Here we have a mass party with two or three other parties very small in numbers (but not in energy).

From what we can see in the press and hear on the wireless of the new Russian constitution (which will even allow a priest to vote), it does not seem a very big thing to ask our C.P. and I.L.P. comrades to do as I suggest. I think it would be a wonderful thing for the workers and a grand sacrifice for such comrades as Harry Pollitt, Jimmy Maxton, and others to bury themselves in the rank and file of the Labour Party, to emerge in a few years as working-class leaders with millions of followers. It would not be possible then to put Harry in jail for what he was thinking.

III.

By J. C. DANIELS

(*Secretary, Durham University Labour Club*).

IN the most interesting and enlightening discussion which has been taking place in the LABOUR MONTHLY on the question of the United Front, there has, from time to time, crept in statements which, while formally supporting the formation of the United Front, may in effect, be utilised by the reactionary leadership of the T.U.C. and Labour Party as an argument *against* the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party. I find also that these statements occur too often in discussion of these problems to be ignored by those within the ranks of the Labour Party who desire unity. I refer to the statements to the effect that the Communist Party has now recognised the error of the path which it has pursued since 1928 and that this new approach to sponsor working-class unity marks the first stage in the process of rectification of these errors. R.P.D. found it necessary to correct these distortions (in the April issue), but I fear that he considered that prudence dictated a formal denunciation rather than an analysis of their real content.

Certainly, one cannot pretend to defend each act of every individual communist during those disappointing years of the second Labour Government. But it is precisely because the communist analysis of the rôle of Mondism and of the Labour Government and the general line of their Party, dictated by this analysis, has been proved doubly correct by subsequent events that the rank and file of the Labour Party are moving away from the old reformist leadership (and a section of this leadership, afraid of isolation, is astute enough to follow reluctantly in the rear) towards *unity of action* with those who have consistently advocated working-class struggle as the sole means of working-class emancipation. As a member of the Labour Party, I can, perhaps speak with less sense of personal gratification and " I told you so " feeling than R.P.D., and

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therefore a little more boldly. I support and work for the United Front not because the communists have recanted and repented, but because, in general, they have *always been right* while the Dalton-MacDonald-Citrine line has proved its utter bankruptcy. Compare, for instance, the position in 1929.

(1) The communists were defending, might and main, both the achievements and the aspirations of the Soviet Union, while the reformists by their hostile criticism and slander, encouraged Imperialist intervention. To-day, Sidney Webb, the theoretician of reformism, voices his whole-hearted approval of " Soviet Communism."

(2) The communists forecast the end of capitalist post-war Stabilisation, warned the workers against the illusions of Fordism, attacked Mondism as a weapon of trade union policy and vehemently criticised the spineless MacDonald Government. To-day, we know with what humiliation to ourselves, they were again completely vindicated.

Implicit in the statement " the communists were once in error," there remains a belief in the efficacy of " class peace " and a refusal to observe the impotence which such a doctrine imposes on the workers. A United Front built on such a basis as this would be worse than useless—it would be suicidal. It would not only disrupt the working-class as a whole but also the Communist Party itself for a large section of it would then, inevitably, fall prey to Trotskyish phrasemongering. The chief lesson of France is that electoral and political achievements must be backed up by independent class action in the factory and on the streets.

We have recently observed a new manœuvre on the part of the labour leadership—the popularisation of a Lib-Lab. Coalition as a " British " People's Front. Statements made by such as those I have mentioned objectively help this sabotage and these evasions. All who are anxious that the events of France (and later the victories of the Russian workers) shall be repeated here must bear this in mind. Unity is the healing of the split made in the ranks of the workers by the reformists, who collaborated with the bourgeoisie, by means of *the experience of the masses themselves* of the bankruptcy of reformism and the need for class action against the reactionary finance-oligarchy which is driving *all* to Fascism and War. They are also realising that only in this way will they bring the " middle classes " into the Labour Movement. It is necessary to distinguish between leaders and rank and file in the Social Democratic organisation, as Stalin has pointed out, and also to understand the dialectical movement of each of these as separate yet unified entities.

The People's Front against Fascism and War (workers, professional elements and petty-bourgeoisie) will be built as a consequence of working-class unity. Working-class unity will be built on the basis of an abandonment of Mondism, the displacement of the reactionary leadership

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and the acceptance of Marxism-Leninism as a theoretical guide towards working-class emancipation.

IV.

By WILLIAM RUST

THE leaders of the Labour Party have now opened a heavy fire on the Communists and all the big guns are barking away. Be-whiskered arguments are raked up, quotations tumble over one another (" What did Radek say in 1922 ? "), and bag after bag of " Moscow gold " is dragged out into the light of day. To prove what ? In the words of the National Council of Labour, that :

> In Britain the strength of the Communist Party and its electoral successes have been negligible. The one Parliamentary seat held by the Communist Party was obtained at the expense of the Labour Party.

If British Communism is such an " abject failure," why then all the excitement, the agitated leading articles in the two million sale *Daily Herald*, the passionate denunciation of the " subtle and insidious " united front ?

The leaders of the British Labour Party have answered themselves. They are battering away so furiously precisely because Communism is *not* a negligible force, because the growing movement for unity has produced something like panic in the ranks of the National Council.

Not that we wish to exaggerate the strength of the Communist Party in this country or to magnify its achievements. But in face of the torrent of abuse from the labour leaders we are concerned to establish that the Communist Party is a living part of the working class movement rooted firmly in the mass organisations and standing for a political programme that is widely known and supported.

By what presumption does the National Council contemptuously dismiss Communism when they know that a very large number, if not a majority, of the active rank and file are supporting the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party ? The demand for affiliation has swept the Labour Movement with irresistible enthusiasm. Who expected that in a few short months some 1,500 working-class organisations, including big trade unions, would have gone on record for affiliation ? Even the weak vote at the conference of the National Union of Railway-men records 25 per cent. of that union in favour of the Communist proposal.

No leadership has the right to ignore such a widespread expression of rank-and-file opinion. If there exists a reasoned case against the united front then let it be stated and seriously discussed, but we most strongly protest against the present calculated attempt to poison opinion and to

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confuse the movement by means of abusive attacks on the Communists. " When in doubt abuse your opponent " may be a recognised principle of political demagogy, but the labour leaders are only degrading the movement when they resort to such methods, they are only drawing attention to their own incoherence and inability to state a case corresponding to the needs of the workers.

From Olympian heights the labour leaders look down on the small Communist Party and sneeringly dismiss it. Very well. The Communist Party is small and the Labour Party is large. For the present division, stagnation and lack of progress the labour leaders and not the Communists must take the responsibility. Old policies have been tried and found wanting, not only have two elections been lost, but it is everywhere whispered that the " Labour Party does not want power " ; the middle class is not being won over, working-class votes are being lost. Morrison & Co., for all their complacency, are not the leaders of a great successful, advancing movement ; they have to answer for a policy that has led to defeat and gives no hope of future victories.

It is not the Communist Party, but the leadership of the Labour Party that is on trial. MacDonald has been shaken off, but MacDonaldism still retains a paralysing grip. The policy of the Labour Party to-day is characterised by faltering and hesitancy, an inability firmly to grasp those issues capable of bringing the masses into action against the National Government. Since the General Election Baldwin has been discredited and the prestige of the Government undermined ; it still staggers on not because of its own strength, but because of the Opposition's weakness.

Let us face the real issues, those issues which are of such anxious concern to the workers but which are so blatantly ignored in the statement of the National Council of Labour. Firstly, how to fight and defeat the National Government ? Secondly, how to preserve peace and stop the rearmament ramp ? Thirdly, how to improve wages and conditions in industry and defeat the new attack on the unemployed ? Fourthly, how to grapple with malnutrition and bad housing ? The National Council flares about " Moscow gold " and deliberately avoids these issues because it lacks confidence in its own policy which is both ineffective and unpopular.

The policy of the Labour Party leadership can be summed up as : wait until the next General Election. This is a policy of drift which will result in the next General Election being a repetition of the last. The only way to win elections is to fight the Government all along the line and all the time. The opportunities presented by the Hoare-Laval episode and the Thomas scandal were not utilised. Why ? During the Thomas scandal it was freely stated that the Labour Party was not ready to turn out

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the Government and take power. But *when* will it be ready and how many more opportunities must it let slip by ?

The plain fact is that the Labour Party E.C. takes no steps to prepare those issues and work out the tactical line that would lead to victory over the National Government. After losing two General Elections the leadership of the Labour Party ought at least critically to review its failures, especially after entirely opposite results have been achieved across the Channel. France is either ignored or dismissed as the product of conditions not applicable to Britain. Apparently all that is applicable to Britain are those " settled policies " which have landed the Labour Movement in its present position.

Of late the chief function of the Labour Party publicists has been an explanation of why nothing can be done and why any change would be disastrous. For example, Herbert Morrison explains that an alliance with the Communists would mean the loss of the middle-class vote. But has the Labour Party got the middle-class vote now ? The Labour Party has never recovered the large number of middle-class votes that it lost after the debacle of 1931. How to win them back is the real problem that Morrison ought to be tackling.

The Communists are as much concerned as Morrison with the question of winning over the middle class, and they do not favour policies that mean the alienation of the small man. But Morrison refuses to recognise that it is precisely *his* policy that has alienated large sections of the middle class from Labour and thrown them back into the arms of the Conservative Party.

Morrison's bogey is that the united front will mean the loss of middle-class support, whereas the Communists contend that it is precisely the united front that will win them over and that this view has been already borne out in practice. Nobody disputes that there is an alliance between the workers and the middle class in France achieved on the basis of the workers' united front. Why is such an alliance impossible in Britain ? Morrison may lightly dismiss the lesson of France, but there is considerable evidence (*e.g.*, the correspondence columns of the *New Statesman and Nation*) that the middle class in Britain has certainly come under the influence of these events. The views of G. D. H. Cole, for example, are in striking contrast to those of Herbert Morrison :

> I believe we can pull this Government down—and not only that, but also force a new General Election by means of pressure from outside Parliament—on condition, of course, that the forces of the Left act together and utilise the discontent over home affairs as well as over the handling of international policy.
>
> France is doing great things with her *Front Populaire.* I want to see great things doing here, and I believe if all of us who believe in peace and liberty join hands we can quickly win at least as resounding a victory

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> in Great Britain as our like-minded friends across the Channel have been celebrating so fruitfully during the past month. (*Manchester Evening News*, July 10.)

But apart from such expressions the idea of a People's Front in Britain has so far received rather unsympathetic treatment within the working class. It has either been ignored or dismissed as out of the question until a united front of the working class has been established. Also some fear has been expressed that propaganda for a People's Front was a red herring that would distract attention from the drive for the workers' united front.

Would it not be more correct to welcome every striving towards the People's Front whilst at the same time concentrating the main effort on the building of working-class unity? What will come first is rather a schematic question. The big issue before the working class movement is the working out of that tactical line which will ensure the largest possible mobilisation against the National Government and for the return of a Labour Government. And this means that the idea of a People's Front needs to be widely popularised in Great Britain and discussed as a practical proposition.

It would not be correct to postpone the propaganda for a People's Front until working-class unity is established. Firstly, because it is necessary to draw the middle class into immediate activity against the Government, and secondly, because all incipient forms of People's Front propaganda and activity are bound to swell the tide of unity and strengthen the fight for the workers' united front. This is proven, for example, by the results of the Derby by-election.

If the National Council of Labour were to come out now with a clear declaration in favour of a People's Front against the National Government, if it were to declare its readiness to take common action on an agreed programme and to meet all those willing to adhere to a Left bloc (Communists, I.L.P., Liberals, Council of Action, etc.), there would be a wide and enthusiastic response throughout the country.

The welding together of the forces of the Left and the working out of a programme of action will not be an easy matter, especially as it is not a question of a paper programme or a mere electoral agreement, but the creation of a movement and mass activity throughout the country in support of the agreed demands. But the difficulties are no reason why this great historical task should be shirked. Let the effort be made instead of sticking in the rut of old but disproved policies. Let there be a final break with the sickening complacency of Transport House.

Of all the labour leaders only Morrison has so far written seriously about the problem of the People's Front in Britain and, as to be expected, his conclusions are merely depressing because he misses the heart of the question and wanders into an arithmetical, electoral calculation. Writing

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in the *News-Chronicle* (July 17, 1936), he argues that a Labour alliance with the Communists means the loss of millions of votes, while an alliance with the Liberals is impracticable because the Labour Party is not likely to break away from its " basic principle of policical independence," and in any case the Liberals themselves may not agree.

We welcome Herbert Morrison in his new rôle as the sturdy guardian of political independence (not long ago he was greeting every business man as a brother), but surely it would be both a sign of independence and acumen if the Labour Party came out now with proposals for a fighting alliance of the workers and middle class against the National Government ? With incredible obstinacy Morrison refuses to face the fact that the Labour Party is losing its political independence by its present inability to fight the National Government, and that a bold lead for action would arouse masses behind its banner. Let Morrison ask his French colleagues if the Socialist Party sullied its independence by its successful alliance with other parties against reaction !

Apparently Morrison does hold this opinion. He foretells that there would be great difficulty in getting " as mild an electoral programme as that of the French Front Populaire " through a British Labour Party Conference. But why should Labour delegates vote for a desert of dead words like " Labour and the Nation," rather than a programme of immediate action ? It is far better to defeat the means test now than to vote portentously for a bundle of paper plans about future Socialist reorganisation. And there is not much doubt that the French workers feel greater confidence in their class power and ability to achieve Socialism now that their " mild programme " has been a means of clearing out a reactionary government.

It is necessary to say again and again, even to the point of wearisome repetition, that the question of a People's Front in Britain is not the adding and subtracting of votes ; it means the banding together of all opponents of the National Government, the arousing into political activity of those masses at present lukewarm or confused and the leading of a daily fight against the National Government for peace, democracy and the bread and butter demands of the workers by hand or brain. If this were done the Labour Party would not lose but gain millions of votes.

There is no doubt to-day that the idea of unity has gripped the imagination of the Labour rank and file. If the leadership, understanding that the progress of a political party depends upon the enthusiasm of its active workers, were to lead this burning desire to practical fruition the glorious path of victory would open before us.

The Communist Party will go on fighting for this unity policy despite the kindly advice of a number of well meaning people that the Communist

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Party can best further the cause of unity by cutting its own throat. "The logical step," writes Arthur Woodburn in *Forward* (July 18, 1936), "is not to seek affiliation as a party, separate in purpose and tactics, but to liquidate the C.P. as such." Woodburn's idea of unity is the suppression of views disagreeable to himself. But there are even some very good friends of the Communist Party who, doubtful of the possibility of forcing through affiliation, urge the Communists to disband the party, enter the Labour Party as individuals and in this way to win the support of the rank and file.

We can assure both friend and foe that the Communist Party has no intention of committing hari-kari. It would indeed be the very midsummer of madness for the Communist Party to disappear just at the moment when it is conducting the most successful fight in its history. *The fight for unity, for the reorganisation of the Labour Movement on a new militant basis has now become the central question of the day only because of the determined insistence of the Communist Party.* If there was no Communist Party there would be no organised fight for the united front.

To-day that fight is entering its decisive round and the reactionary leaders equipped with the *Daily Herald* (untainted by Moscow but financed by Odhams' gold), are making a desperate effort to keep things as they are. But victory is within our grasp if the organised work is kept up, if the Communist Party steadily continues its work.

The Communist Party as it exists in Britain to-day represents a store of revolutionary experience and theory as well as a fighting force of the working-class. As such it plays an important part in fashioning working-class ideology, initiating new policies and disseminating international experiences. Comrades who talk lightly about dissolving such an organisation neither appreciate its value to the working class nor the essential meaning of the affiliation campaign.

Affiliation has become the spearhead of the drive for unity in this country, the practical proposal which is greatly stimulating the fight on the every day bread-and-butter issues, and raising before the keen Socialist workers the picture of a new type of Labour Movement; enormously strengthened trade unions and a Labour Party reconstructed as a broad coalition of all working-class organisations and permitting the free expression of opinion.

Dissolution of the Communist Party would mean the end of this fight. Those comrades who in their anxiety to get the Communists inside the Labour Party advocate dissolution, should ask themselves just why they want to see the Communists brought in. Without a doubt it is because they are appreciative of the work of the Communist Party. The dissolution of the Party would not leave so many thousand Communists

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working individually ; it would mean the end of Communism as a political force, the end of the collective work and discussion which produces the lines of policy so welcome to the left worker, the end of the *Daily Worker* and the literature of Marxism-Leninism.

In short, the dissolution of the Communist Party would make impossible just what the left worker is after, namely, a close connection between the revolutionary vanguard and the main army of labour. All experience proves that the stronger the Communist Party the stronger the united front. The great need to-day is to build up the Communist Party in order to give even greater strength to the affiliation campaign. In local Labour Parties one often hears the remark, "We are Communists in everything but membership." If these workers were to enter the ranks of the Party, if instead of 10,000 Communists there were 20,000 all working together for unity and affiliation, an early and speedy victory for the united front would be assured.

[Previous contributions by *David Freeman* (late Labour Candidate for Portsmouth, C.), *R. F. St. J. Reade* (Westbury), *E. Shearer* (Aylesbury), and *Professor G. E. G. Catlin* (Sunderland), will be found in the February issue ; *Prof. Harold J. Laski*, *John Lewis* (Great Yarmouth), *W. H. Bennett* (Dover), and *D. W. Flanagan* (Editor "Rotherhithe Labour News"), in the March issue ; *R. McKinnon Wood* (Harborough), *T. D. Smith* (Member, first E.C. of N.C.L.C.), *John Morris* (Gen. Secretary, University Labour Federation), *Leonard Wells* and *R.P.D.* (in his Notes), in the April issue ; *George Hicks*, *M.P.*, in the May issue ; *Aneurin Bevan*, *M.P.*, *Rev. Richard Lee* (West Wolverhampton), *Councillor A. E. Turpin* (N.E. Bethnal Green L.P.), *G. D. Miller* (late Chairman, Oxford University Labour Club), and *B. J. Chaplin* (Newport Labour League of Youth) in the June issue ; *Councillor H. Eastwood* (Agent and Secretary, Bolton Labour Party), *Councillor R. Bland* (Nelson Borough Council), *Councillor G. Treacher* (Watford Borough Council), and *L. Franklyn-Vaile* (Chairman, Norwood Socialist League), in the July issue. A copy of each of these issues can be obtained from THE LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, London, W.C.1, for 7d. post free.]

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PROBLEMS OF TRADE UNIONISM IN 1936

[*The following is a further series of contributions to the discussion on Trade Union Policy which was opened in the May issue with an article by Arthur Horner, President of the South Wales Miners' Federation. In view of the holding of the Trades Union Congress at the beginning of September, Comrade Horner in the next issue will reply to the discussion which has so far taken place.*]

I.

By J. D. LAWRENCE

(*Chairman London District, Amalgamated Engineering Union*).

ONE of the problems of trade unionism is the failure to concentrate its power upon the attainment of the national trade union programme. Year after year the Trades Union Congress adds to its ever-lengthening programme without appearing to consider ways and means of forcing its proposals into law. No report is submitted upon the progress of the chief proposals as a whole, and the address of the fraternal delegate from the Labour Party seldom contains references to the prospects of legislation on behalf of the programme. As the Labour Party was founded by the T.U.C. for the express purpose of achieving the programme, it should furnish a report of its work annually to the parent body upon the specific items of legislation bearing upon the programme. This would lead to better co-ordination of the work of the two bodies and bring home to Congress delegates the need for greater financial backing of the political wing of trade unionism.

Many Congress delegates fail to perform their work satisfactorily. Their duties extend beyond the period of Congress itself. Though the reason for bringing together six hundred delegates is never specifically stated, every delegate should understand that he is brought to the Congress to be instructed in its work, for the purpose of becoming the exponent of its policy in his particular district. We must have men everywhere capable, alert, and active in promoting trade unionism. To further the idea a general debate should be staged each year, not upon the merits of the programme, but upon methods of propaganda in its support, and particularly upon countering, more effectively, the propaganda of the employers' federations.

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The Labour Party talks of adopting an election programme : in other words it is going to draw up a summary of its demands which it will submit to the electorate pledging itself to pass them into law within a given period. Few trade unionists understand that general elections are really contests to acquire power to push the trade union programme into law.

The Labour Party should not be permitted to step in front of its own parent and pose as the all-important body. At the time of its Annual Conference, public attention becomes so concentrated upon its proposals that the decisions of the T.U.C. held one month earlier tend to become forgotten.

Let the country never forget that the Labour Party is the instrument of the trade unions : instituted to acquire control of government for the main purpose of passing their programme into law. It is sometimes necessary to reiterate the declaration that the unions did not create the Labour Party to enable quacks to voice their particular nostrums to the detriment of the programme.

A constant weakness is that too much valuable time is spent upon policies and programmes and an almost negligible fraction upon methods to secure their objectives. Policy-making causes endless talk, leading to clashes, and to the inevitable formation of dissident groups. The loose control of affiliated unions exercised by the T.U.C. is a main cause of its own lack of driving power behind the programme. Each union is a law unto itself ; it jealously guards its right to follow its own trade programme. In effect it enables the employers' federations to concentrate their full power upon individual unions and to defeat all singly-launched attacks with comparative ease.

Now, the earnest trade unionist is anxious to get on with his work of converting the millions of unorganised workers to their acceptance of the elementary principles of trade unionism. Time spent upon policy-making ought to be employed upon the practical work of helping him to make contact with his unorganised fellows. Factories are so zealously guarded and patrolled to-day that even momentary contact has become difficult. This segregation, which is quite deliberate by the employers, necessitates on our part the training of ever-increasing groups of young men and women skilled in factory propaganda ; capable of investing or laying siege to the factories day after day until effective organisation is got underweigh within. Thus, it is not so much a policy or programme that is wanted as the creation of an army of trade union volunteers ; capable, trained, enthusiastic, prepared to devote their lives to the cause.

How can these be secured ? It is evident that we must train them ourselves. Here the National Council of Labour Colleges can be of inestimable help. It can specialise in this work. It would be quick to

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respond to the demand of those unions possessing the imagination to specify their requirements and unafraid to pay for results. In London alone the Amalgamated Engineering Union is in urgent need of a hundred members trained in its rules, policy, agreements and propaganda, to enable the Union to launch an organising campaign designed to cover the majority of the engineering factories. London presents an appalling state of non-unionism prevailing throughout its myriad industries. Thousands of trade union apostles are needed to seize the present magnificent opportunities to sweep vast numbers of workers into the unions.

The trade union movement suffers a degree of stagnation through the lack of better men to direct its work. Because of the few volunteer workers there is a deplorable diffusion of effort. Each becomes overworked and unable to maintain his efficiency. It can be conceded that modern full-time officials are more capable than those of an earlier generation : the pity is that great unions like the A.E.U. are permitted so few for their successful development. Another weakness is the lack of contact between everyday union workers and their parliamentary members and candidates. Many of these have been away from the factories so long that they have lost the vivid remembrance of grievances and burning resentment against factory tyranny held by the better educated workers to-day.

Labour candidates ought to be selected on their records of service and efficiency. Too many get to Parliament as a reward for long service in local trade unionism. They go there too late in life to become efficient in the study and practice of politics and remain silent back-benchers, thereby preventing younger, better qualified men from seizing and exploiting opportunities for the promotion of Labour legislation. Clearly they must stand aside in the interests of greater efficiency.

Another drawback is the large number of trade union branches of stagnant membership exhibiting little interest in the routine work of their unions. It is advisable to close these and to draft the members to branches of larger membership. The bigger the branch the greater the response to propaganda of a vigorous and militant character. Present-day disputes with powerful federations demand stronger concentration of forces. The retention of a vast number of tiny units involves a deplorable waste of previous effort.

The problem of the " unofficial " strike must be given more attention. It can be used effectively to destroy the carefully fostered notion that " the firm tries to play the game and to give every man a square deal." Many workers in factories organised upon sports club and welfare lines still believe these pretensions. It is not necessary to employ exaggeration in the trade union case against the firm. It is our general experience that pressing grievances are invariably ignored by the management.

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Discharges for trade union activity are rarely withdrawn by negotiation. Only a stoppage of work has the slightest effect, because the firm holds its right of dismissal as a cardinal principle of the industrial system, to be defended at all costs. On the contrary the modern trade union view is that every worker has an inherent right to his job and to enjoy equal security with the staff. Our propaganda should concentrate upon the importance of control of the sources of employment and to impress the workers with the idea that this means in practice dispossessing the shareholders of their ownership of the factories. Employers run the factories by autocratic dictatorship. The contrast between State law and Factory Management " law " must be explained in detail to the workers in order to destroy their present belief that " the firm has the right to own the factory." We have to change the prevailing belief in the sacred right of ownership. It is this general acquiescence which enables the firms to rule the workers. Once this becomes changed, the way is paved for driving home the conviction that the only way to secure the interests of factory workers is to " expropriate the expropriators."

Clearly, the spontaneous strike launched at the right moment unhampered by the delays of Executive sanction and ballot votes must be retained at all costs. Modern strikes are soldiers' battles : an essential tactic in trade union warfare.

Experience in recent years demonstrates that an expanding development of unity can be secured by genuine search for points of agreement and practical co-operation. Care should be exercised in the selection of representative advocates of unity. Let skilled diplomacy displace unrestrained criticism. The case for trade union unity, national and international, becomes irresistibly attractive when presented in genial guise. Unity cannot be won without skilful, persistent effort, and the LABOUR MONTHLY has rendered valuable service to this movement by its generous provision of facilities for this all-important discussion.

II.

By W. MONSLOW

(*Candidate for Executive Committee A.S.L.E. & F.*).

WE live in days of rapid change. The world politically, industrially and socially is in the melting pot.

Perhaps with the exception of the diehard type of mind, Trade Unionism is now accepted as an integral part of our economic and industrial system, and the means through which wages and working conditions are regulated.

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The machinery of wage negotiation, it must be clearly understood, can only deliver conditions of employment worth while having, when supported by strong, virile and clearly defined trade union policy.

Effective trade union organisation will without question reflect itself thoroughly when it is numerically strong and representative of working-class interest. I am in complete agreement with Comrade Horner's analysis: there is need for a realisation on the part of the rank and file to recognise that only by the acceptance of the class struggle will it be possible to emerge successfully from the shackles of capitalist exploitation.

The consistent deviation from the path to socialism, the liberalising tactics of political labour leaders, and the compromising class-collaborating policy of trade union leaders, as per the Mond-Turner business, means militant organisations are more than ever necessary.

1926—1936

The General Strike was the national result of years of building up the movement, not particularly and specially for the General Strike, but it was inevitable inasmuch that trade unions had, along with the capitalist organisations, grown and increased in power, financially and numerically, for the specific purpose of defending the economic status in the industrial field. If the trade union martyrs of history could have risen from their graves and witnessed the discipline of the workers in every industry, when the command went out to down tools, it would have consoled them that they did not suffer and die in vain.

From a class fight against the enemy, the workers' leaders turned to collaboration with them.

For Trade Unionism to lose its fighting force, meaning the strike weapon, would admit of a useless armour in industrial warfare, which would generate a cowardice among the mass that would shake the confidence of the unions in each as to render the Trades Union Congress impotent, and for all practical purposes an obsolete institution.

The policy now being pursued of compromise and class-collaboration must inevitably destroy any hope of success by industrial action. Is it too far beyond the bounds of common sense to suggest that in the light of the experience of 1926 the trade unions to-day should present a united front from the beginning of the negotiations so that every section feels and knows it has the full support of the whole trade union movement?

The Industrial Peace Stunt

This movement is speciously described as the "Road to the New Era of Prosperity," but present-day facts show that all that is meant by "Peace in Industry" is Industrial Slavery, wages in basic industries to remain below subsistence level.

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The Trades Disputes Act of 1927, the blacklegs' charter, gives the ruling class enormous power over trade union activities and will be used when deemed necessary. The Emergency Powers Act, 1920, is still in being. Under it a state of emergency may be declared by the Government which can then at once acquire the powers of a dictatorship.

Rationalisation Intensified

" Rationalisation," in the words of the late Sir Alfred Mond (Lord Melchett), " is simply the rational control of industry to ensure as far as possible that you do not produce more in your market than it can absorb." This involves inevitably and of set purpose, the closing down of plant and machinery and the use of every labour saving, and every fuel and power saving, device which, with the elimination of every unnecessary link in the chain of distribution, may result in a saving in the cost of output. This means the displacement of labour, not only from production but also from distribution. It results in a further limitation of the money in the hands of possible purchasers. How it is hoped to cure the disease by a further injection of the germ that caused it is one of the mysteries concealed under the current economic jargon.

This method, in addition to its blind confusion, plainly invites disapproval from any ethical standpoint. What possible chance is there for industrial peace under the foregoing conditions ? You cannot mix oil and water, neither can you reconcile a fox and a goose, a hawk and a sparrow, or a crocodile and a man. It is equally impossible to get peace and poverty to live in the same house unless it is a dead house.

Railway Workers in the Present Crisis

A million and a half of British working-class men, women and children depend directly for their livelihood upon the four main line railways of this country.

Since the Railways Act of 1921 let us consider the machinery involved. There is the Central Wages Board, and the National Wages Board, both of which have meant endless discussion and delay, gradual reductions not only in wages and conditions, but also in status for thousands of railway workers employed, plus the dismissal of 160,000 since the operation of the Act.

We are feeling the effects of the present stage of capitalism, as in other industries : rationalisation, co-ordination is taking place, labour-saving devices are being extended, work is being speeded up.

What should be done ?

1. Demand a shorter working week to reabsorb men dismissed by the process of rationalisation.

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2. Definite resolutions for the complete restoration of the conditions obtained in the National Agreement of 1919, for all railway workers.

3. Intensive propaganda immediately to rally our members within the branches to work for the improvement, solidifying and perfecting of the respective organisations to ensure the desired results.

4. The convening of joint area conferences to prepare for action ; methods to be discussed as to the best possible means whereby such a movement could be most effective.

5. The Trades Union Congress to be approached by affiliated organisations for concerted action by all trade unions seeking wage increases.

Nationalisation

Two major industries are peculiarly ripe for nationalisation, mining and railways. Hitherto it has been assumed that the mines would be the first and the easiest to nationalise. It might be wise to concentrate upon the railways as the key to the policy of nationalisation.

The present railway position is governed by the Railways Act, 1921, which has simplified the problem of nationalisation.

Hitherto there were 125 companies, now there are only four. This much having been done, the argument for further amalgamation and unification into one system is complete.

While it is true that the 1921 Act embodied the new principle of co-operation in railway affairs, nevertheless the heart of the financial problem remains unchanged. Control of wealth controls work and life, and to-day, as Marx forecasted, economic power is concentrated in the hands of a few.

Unless this financial despotism is crushed, numbered indeed are the days of Democracy. The ultimate aim of the workers within the industry should be to secure self-government for the workers. This means Socialism. However, the future is still uncertain, suffering, repression is rife. Our only hope to achieve the desired results is to be found in a class conscious, virile trade union organisation.

Only with the breakdown of capitalism and the workers' assumption of power will the trade unions find release from their present limitations and be able to embark upon the industrial reconstruction of society.

Let us unify our forces for the overthrow of capitalism, for the establishment of workers' control, for the building up of Socialism.

III.

By A Member of the Railway Clerks Association

SINCE May, 1926, with the exception of a few work-to-rule "strikes," there has been "peace" on the railways of Great Britain. The word "Mondism" is never heard ; but nevertheless

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the leadership is dominated by the idea that this is a period of " temporary decline " in which " friendly negotiations " with a generally enlightened railway management will *modify* the severity of the cuts which would face us if we presented ourselves at the Railway Staff National Tribunal.

If our claims are based solely on the financial position of the companies, our case at the *Central Negotiating Machinery* could not be a very strong one. True, the railway profit of £33 millions is a substantial sum to pay to shareholders, but *from the point of view of capitalism* (and that is the *dominant* view of such a tribunal) it is not a satisfactory dividend on a capital of £1,200 millions. With the " cuts," etc., in operation, the railways are just about paying 3 per cent. on their capital. (From *our* point of view it is well to bear in mind the fact that of the £1,200 millions capital, £60 millions is " water " and £240 millions were squandered on land charges, legal waste, and competition.)

But it is more important that we remember that ever since the 1921 Act, amalgamations, pooling, grouping, have been directed to effect the rationalisation of railway working. *Were it not for that rationalisation not one penny would be available for the payment of dividends to railway shareholders.* Not only have there been " cuts " in railway wages and salaries, not only is " stagnation " rife throughout the service, not only have conditions been debased, but there has also been the very serious reduction of the number of workers employed by 23 per cent. in 15 years ; whereas the staff employed in 1921 was 736,000, to-day it is down to 560,000. (Rationalisation, by enabling the railways to " carry on " with three-quarters of their former staff, hides from us this position of crisis to which capitalism has brought this " sheltered industry.")

But for rationalisation, pooling, stagnation, staff reductions and wage-cuts, there would be no dividend paid on British railways. Faced by this fact, and by the fact that the Net Revenue on British railways is almost £5 million less now than on the 1930 figures on which the full cut was awarded, it may be seen that the Mondist leaders have a strong claim on the support of the *reformists* amongst the railway workers.

* * * * *

But there are new factors which the Railway Staff National Tribunal must consider. A strike wave has swept through industry in France and Belgium. There is an *upward* economic tendency within the conditions of economic crisis. There is haste in Britain's war preparations (Duff Cooper gives four to four-and-a-half years) : strike action would hamper them ; and " time is the all-important factor."

Then there are two factors which *we* must keep well to the fore. One the immediately important fact that resentment against loss of normal grade-to-grade advancement, and irritation against losses on Sunday pay, overtime, etc., " stagnation " have brought railwaymen to a frame of

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mind much more ready for militant action than in 1931. The other, the more important fact that the U.S.S.R. is clearly demonstrating the truth, that whilst those who wait for the revival of capitalist industry have not yet got back to pre-war, the seizure of power by the workers of the U.S.S.R. has made possible a vastly increased production upon the basis of which a higher standard of life becomes a possibility.

The *Daily Mail* is "supporting" the demand for the restoration of the "cut." This fact must not, of course, hamper us in the struggle for improved conditions; but it should serve to warn us that we must have in the very forefront of our calculations the ideological effects of our wage struggles. Mondism meant "Peace with Capitalism!" Militancy must not mean "Peace with Imperialist War Preparations."

If the three Unions are to appear at the Central Negotiating Machinery to demand the ending of all cuts and the granting of improved conditions, their case must not be that the exceptionally rosy position of British railways justifies improved conditions. Neither can any militant stand for improved conditions as a Judas price for peace with imperialist war preparations. Any general claim must be based on railway workers' power; the railwaymen's solidarity, which alone can ensure that power, must be based on railworkers' needs and the practicability of meeting them by a sane use of the productive powers available to-day. (The militant railway worker must have as his reply to the Mondist who pleads that railways cannot yield increased wage demands, the proof from the U.S.S.R. that the way forward is not to wait for the revival of dying capitalism, but to go forward to the building of Socialism.)

* * * * *

The conferences of the three railway unions are not taking this line. The R.C.A. Conference did not repudiate the 1¼ per cent. settlement, but for unity it agreed to line up for more with the other unions. (There were amendments in favour of basing wage-cut claims not on the companies' finances, but on the workers' needs.) The N.U.R. rejected the cut offer more on the basis of the companies' ability to pay within capitalism than on workers' needs. (At least two speakers, however, emphasised needs and potentialities.) The A.S.L.E. & F. sent its "leaders" back to get through to the Central Negotiating Machinery with a costly new programme, but why, when, or how, no one seems clear. Such a position is filled with dangers. Leaders may formally "obey" their followers and "loyally" reach a rejection of such demands. Still more serious is the danger that the leaders may effect a settlement based on the "co-operation of rail workers with rail owners" in carrying through the preparations for imperialist war. There is also a serious possibility that the A.S.L.E. & F. decisions may end in mere talk or lead to *isolated* action of a disastrous character.

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The local departmental committees and the sectional councils need to be used to the uttermost to secure what can be obtained from that machinery, and further to demonstrate the extremely limited character of such machinery.

On the main issue of a common move against wage cuts, against the debasement of conditions, for a general betterment of the railway workers' agreements, the need of the moment is for the effecting of unity in the preparation and prosecution of such demands.

Either officially by inter-executive discussions or by rank-and-file committees, let us reach united programme demands and unitedly a basis for such demands. Let representatives of the three Unions reach unity as to the extent to which our demands can be effected by negotiation, parliamentary action, industrial action, or political action. On the basis of such discussions let us unite railway workers for joint action.

Let us oppose any negotiations which tie us to class collaboration for war preparations ; let us beware of unco-ordinated one union action which will endanger workers' unity. Let us act in the way which will make one union for all railway workers an early possibility.

P.S.—A few years ago we worked to show the hollowness of the cry " War means Work " : let us not fail to show how substantial is the danger that " Wage improvements may be a price paid for imperialist war preparations."

IV.

By J. JACOBS, Junr.

(*Branch Delegate, National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association, to the London Trades Council*).

IN the May issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY there appeared an article on " Problems of Labour Policy " by George Hicks, in which he states very clearly the need (*a*) for the inspiration of the working-class forces ; and (*b*) for the building up and strengthening of the class organisations of the workers—political, economic and co-operative.

" There is need," he says, " to establish such intensive organisations and to carry on such intensive education amongst the workers as will enable them speedily to respond in thought and action to decisive changes in the situation," and . . . " to move steadily, consistently forward with growing strength and increasing consciousness of purpose amidst the rapidly changing conditions, dealing with each situation as it arises, winning positions with the trade unions in industry, with the co-operatives in the consumers' realm, with the Labour Party in politics, ...to the conquest of political power, this as an essential prerequisite of overcoming capitalism and laying the foundations of Socialist Economy."

He then goes on to give the following figures : " Only about 4,500,000 men and women belong to trade unions. 7,000,000 belong to co-operative

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societies. Roughly about a million are really consciously within the political Labour Movement . . . . The working class is largely an immense number of unorganised individuals . . . . "

Wanted An Organised Recruiting Campaign

But having made this analysis showing the urgent and imperative need for strengthening our class forces, Comrade Hicks comes to a full stop. Herein lies the weakness, in my opinion, of the article. No attempt is made from this analysis to show in a concrete and practical fashion how this weakness of our organisations can be overcome and remedied. It would surely have been most helpful had Comrade Hicks indicated what steps the Trades Union Congress could and should take as the Executive body of our industrial organisation to give leadership to the hundreds of thousands of trade unionists who are anxious to do something to strengthen their unions, and who are anxiously looking for a lead.

What part can our hundreds of Trades Councils play in a vast, well organised and *spectacular* recruiting campaign.

What, for example, is the situation in London? How far are we organised? What are our biggest weaknesses and how can they be remedied? What is the position of the young and female workers?

Perhaps in this article we can show some of the many things that can be done to make for 100 per cent. trade unionism, bearing in mind that a strong industrial organisation is the best guarantee of a strong political movement, and a safeguard against the black horror of Fascism.

What is the Situation in London?

There are in the London area roughly 2½ million workers who are insured under the Unemployment Insurance Acts; of this number some 300,000 are members of a trade union, in other words 7 out of every 8 workers eligible for trade union membership are *unorganised*, as against an average of 1 in 3½ *organised* for the rest of the country.

In this connection the following rough figures are instructive :—

Industry.	Number Employed.	Organised Number.	Organised Per cent.
Building	199,000	60,000	30
Railways	70,000	50,000	71
Docks	40,000	25,000	62
L.P.T.B. (Other Transport)	75,000	55,000	73
Printing Paper, etc. ..	108,000	25,000	23
Engineering ..	250,000	40,000	16
Furnishing	50,000	9,000	18
Clothing	150,000	8,000	6
Distributive	600,000	50,000	8
Public Employees ..	100,000	50,000	50

We note, therefore, that the best part of the organised workers are engaged in what can be termed utility services (passenger transport,

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docks, municipal undertakings). In production and distribution our organisation is woefully weak.

At the same time London is becoming more and more an *industrial* area : in 1934 alone 209 new factories were opened mainly along London's outer belt where non-unionism is rampant. Let us for a moment consider this problem, with especial reference to the outer belt where already about 40 per cent. of London's workers are employed.

What is the position in these factories at Slough, Edmonton, Ponders End, Hammersmith, Wembley, Hayes, Dagenham, Gravesend, on the North and West roads ?

These factories are highly mechanised and rationalised with a very much simplified production process. They have little use for skilled craftsmen. Unskilled and semi-skilled labour is the order of the day.

Youth and female labour predominates at wages from 3½d. to 9d. per hour.

Here young lads are recruited from the orphanages, from Durham, Wales, etc., brought into these slave encampments where they know nobody and are strange and are then exploited to the full. Examples are known in Slough of where jobs have been advertised in the provincial press at 1s. to 1s. 2d. per hour. When these adverts. have been answered a letter has been received asking them to call on the firm and if satisfactory they can start work, but *stressing that they must bring the firm's letter with them.* When the applicant presents himself the *letter is taken from him* and he is told that the firm is very sorry but all the jobs at 1s. and 1s. 2d. per hour are filled, but there are still a few jobs at 9d. and 10d. per hour. Picture the dilemma of the young lad who is, maybe, 200 miles from home and friends, and for whom the family in all probability pawned their very last to provide him with fare money to the job.

He knows that at home (in an area called " derelict " by a government that can spend hundreds of millions of pounds on poison gases, bombs, tanks, etc.), there is grim body-destroying poverty with no hopes of a job, and where every additional unemployed month can be reckoned in terms of death brought nearer by slow starvation.

Small wonder then that the job is taken. But even this is not the end. After working for a day or two the lad is told that he is not earning his money, he is not doing enough, but the firm do not want to be too harsh (?) and they are prepared to keep him on *but*, of course, he will have to lose a penny or so per hour until he is more proficient (which, peculiarly enough, he rarely can ever become).

The above is by no means an isolated example, but is fairly general in those factories that employ trainees and labour from depressed areas.

In addition to the shocking rates of wages paid, which represent a deadly menace to the whole trade union movement and are a drag on all attempts

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to increase the union rates, the second important factor is the speed-up and rationalisation processes.

More and more the conveyor belt is being used, particularly in the vast tailoring and light engineering shops (radio), sapping the vitality of our youth, making them old people before they are 30, giving them no time to breathe almost, or to perform ordinary human functions. Not a day passes without its toll of girls fainting or being carried out in fits of hysterics, its toll of neurasthenia and other nervous disorders brought about by this implacable, moving symbol of the drive for profits and yet more profits, and with it all the mad cry of speed-up, speed-up until even in our dreams we see the conveyor and hear the foreman's chant: "You're not doing enough! Speed-up, speed-up!"

In these factories, too, the menace of the open shop, allied to spying and victimisation, becomes a principle with the management. Recent events at the B.B.C., the refusal by Sir John Keith to allow trade union organisation shows this tendency all too clearly, and this in a corporation financed by, in the main, the shillings of the workers and, amongst them, a big proportion of trade unionists.

Here, then, are the main features of the problem confronting us—a problem made more difficult by the overlapping and—regretfully must it be said—the narrow jealousies of the different union organisers.

How to Organise such a Campaign

How, then, to organise this tremendous mass of unorganised workers?

The key to the problem is *activity*. The outstanding example of France, where the French Trade Union Federation gave leadership in fighting for better conditions, and where as a result of this struggle 1,700,000 new trade unionists have been enrolled (the majority in a space of a few weeks).

The lesson for our T.U.C. is plain; to give to the British trade unionists a lead and an example for an intensive and well-prepared trade union recruiting drive.

The appointing by the T.U.C. of a special organiser to tackle the Slough area was a beginning and must be followed up. Would it not be possible for the T.U.C. to map out a concerted plan of campaign in conjunction with Trade Union Executives?

Imagine if on a particular day every main hoarding in the country had trade union recruiting posters on them dealing in a concrete fashion with the main industries in that area, *e.g.*, East London—Furnishing, Clothing; West London—Light Engineering, etc., showing the conditions in unorganised factories as against those in organised ones.

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Could not the *Daily Herald* (in which the T.U.C. owns 49 per cent. of the shares) be used for publicity, exposing the conditions of work in enterprises like Lyons, Ford's, Bata, etc., and really campaigning amongst its 2,000,000 readers for trade unionism ?

If every trade unionist was asked to wear his union badge ; if leaflets were printed and distributed widespread—leaflets that, instead of saying " This —— Union was founded in 18— and has £—,000,000 invested, and paid out in sick and death benefits £—,000," dealt with the effects of the conveyor, the low wages and long hours prevalent in non-union shops and the practical grievances that exist in these factories and against these showed the profits that were being made.

Would not such a campaign materially assist to popularise and build our unions ? Such a scheme is practicable, requiring only organisation and the drawing into the work of the active trade unionists in the branches and factories and the local Trades Councils. Much preparatory work is necessary, and again for this work, the best vehicle is the local Trades Council who could draw in the local trade union branches.

Would it not be possible, too, in this campaign to bridge the separation of our political and economic organisations ? We could get the wards of the Labour Party, co-operative guilds, etc., using their machinery to assist in this organising effort, and the trade unions through their branches, shop stewards, etc., could campaign for the Labour candidates and Party. Therefore the T.U.C. should set out to draw into activity the maximum number of trade unionists and Trades Councils. The following are some suggestions I put forward for developing this :

Area conferences should be called by the T.U.C. of the local Trades Councils and District Committees (*e.g.*, London, Yorkshire, etc.), at which London's position, for instance, could be discussed and plans and suggestions worked out for local conferences. The main points should be :

(*a*) The collecting and tabulating of information by the local Trades Councils about the main unorganised factories in the locality, name and address of firms, principal shareholders, profits ; *e.g.*, production process (degree of mechanisation, conveyor, Bedeaux, etc.) ; number of workers employed (youths, women, adults) ; rates of pay (hourly, piece) ; comparison with Trade union rates ; hours worked ; trade union organisation in factory.

(*b*) The collecting from the trade union branches and shops ; the names of volunteers who are prepared to assist.

(*c*) Some 8,000 trade unionists have been awarded the Tolpuddle Medal for Trade Union recruiting. The T.U.C. should supply each

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Trades Council with a list of those medallists in its area so that they can be used as leaders of the different groups of volunteers.

* * * * *

On the basis of the above the actual task of recruiting becomes a fairly simple job.

A conference is called locally of representatives of the trade union branches, Labour Party wards, and the volunteers, at which a report is made of the actual non-unionism in the area and the main factories to be concentrated on.

Arising from the discussion, work can then be commenced along the following lines: (*a*) The Survey; (*b*) Leaflets; (*c*) Meetings (meetings should be well planned and held at the most advantageous spots, factory gates, recognised meeting places, etc.); (*d*) Publicity, local Press, *Citizen*, etc.

With the above at least a start can be made to strengthen our class forces and to bring about such a revival in Trade Unionism as will provide our best safeguard against Fascism and War, and will bring very much nearer our ultimate goal—the Conquest of Power.

[Previous contributions in this series that followed Comrade Horner in the May issue were from: *J. R. Campbell* and *Gordon Hicks* (Typographical Association) in the June issue; *Bernard Sullivan* (Tailors and Garment Workers), *James Barr* (Patternmakers), *Ted Hill* (Boilermakers) and *Norman Wiseman* (Typographical Association). Copies of each of these issues can be obtained for 7d. post free from 7 John Street, W.C.1.]

[*Owing to very great pressure of space several important articles and book reviews have had to be held over till the September issue.*]

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The Financial Appeal

THE LABOUR MONTHLY feels very gratified to be able to announce that a further thirty odd birthday gifts have been received during this last month, making nearly seventy in all, to mark the 15th anniversary of the launching of the LABOUR MONTHLY in July, 1921.

From the list of acknowledgements it will be seen that the world-wide character of the support which the LABOUR MONTHLY receives is quite clearly evident—from South Africa, Canada, Ireland, U.S.A., Egypt, Palestine, as well as from widely separated points in England, Scotland and Wales.

This splendid result certainly spurs us to make still greater efforts, not only to pay off the remainder of the accumulated debt and secure a full guarantee to meet the still existing deficit, but to increase the circulation to the point where the MONTHLY may finally become self-supporting.

Meanwhile the accumulated debt has still to be dealt with. As we stated in the June issue it amounts to £290. Further the monthly deficit though progressively being reduced in proportion as the circulation increases, to-day stands at £22 a month.

We therefore are confident that readers will continue to support us to the best of their ability, and that those in particular, who for one reason or another were unable to send us a birthday gift, will soon be able to swell either of the funds, both of which need urgent support. Fill in the form for these funds below.

To the Manager, THE LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, London, W.C.1.

**In response to your appeal I enclose herewith the sum of.....as a contribution to the* LABOUR MONTHLY *Debt Fund.*

**I promise to send the sum of.....monthly to the Guarantee Fund until further notice and enclose a first instalment of.....*

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Address .....

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DEBT AND BIRTHDAY FUND.

	£	s.	d.
Already acknowledged ..	25	17	10½
R. Edwards, New Zealand	0	1	0
Profit on Sales, per F.W.B.	0	3	0
F. Isaacs, London, W. ..	0	5	0
V. L. Nash, London, S.W.	0	3	0
P. R. Vincent, Westcliffe-on-Sea	0	2	6
G.T., Dorking	0	5	0
L. and D. Hedley, Conn., U.S.A.	0	3	11
E. Sheinin, Calgary, Canada	0	3	11
G. Caron, Montreal, Canada	0	5	0
J. H. Zeigler, Pa., U.S.A.	0	3	11
W.H.B., Dover	0	0	4½
J. C. Daniels, Stoke-on-Trent	0	2	5
D. McCulloch, Manchester	0	2	6
J. Burcham, London, E...	0	1	6
H. Oxford	3	0	0
A. Nixon, London, E. ..	0	5	0
R.T.S. and A.B.T., Nottingham	0	5	0
D. Gorvett, London, S.W.	0	5	0
P. Knights, London, S.E.	0	5	0
P.H.B., Middlesex ..	0	7	6
Anon, Putney	0	10	0
J. A. Course, London, S.E.	0	2	6
C. C. Bradsworth, Birmingham	0	10	6
Jam Sale proceeds, per Mrs. Singer	0	1	0
Carried forward	£33	12	5

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward ..	33	12	5
Thos. Grenfell, Bath ..	0	2	6
Warren, Surrey	0	2	0
R.S., Cheshire	1	0	0
Komsomol, Croydon ..	0	2	6
Anon, Jersey	0	2	3
H. A. Wheeler, co. Dublin	0	5	0
Anon, Ashton-under-Lyne	1	0	0
J.R.W., London, N. ..	0	2	6
Arc., Cardiff	0	1	0
H. Werden, Ontario, Canada	1	0	0
E. Frank, New York, U.S.A.	0	3	11
A. Ferguson, Glasgow ..	0	1	3
Anon, Egypt	0	12	0
Arabian Reader, Palestine	0	2	6
Australian Writers' League (Melbourne Branch) ..	1	0	0
K.B.K., Sussex	0	5	0
Rosa Luxembourg Group, Bristol	0	5	0
H.G., Herts.	5	0	0
Blackcoat	0	2	6
W. J. Thomas, jun., Port Talbot	0	1	0
E. Boyarsky, South Africa	0	3	6
Parky, South Africa ..	0	2	6
E. S. Sachs, South Africa	1	0	0
"St. John's College," Cambridge	1	0	0
B. W. Neville, London, S.W.	0	10	0
	£47	19	4

GUARANTEE FUND.

(*Amount of Monthly Guarantee*).

	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	15	16	1
Alan Bush, Herts.	1	0	0
	£16	16	1

In addition £1 os. od. has been received for the Guarantee Fund from Onyx.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

World Politics, 1918-1936. R. Palme Dutt. (V. Gollancz.) 382 pp. 5s.

The Revival of Agriculture. A Constructive Policy for Britain. Rural Reconstruction Committee. (Allen & Unwin.) 216 pp. 3s. 6d.

They Helped Hitler. D. N. Pritt, K.C. and Ellis Smith, M.P. (Labour Research Department. 15 pp. 1d.

The Prudential and its Money. (Labour Research Department.) 25 pp. 2d.

The People's Front in France and Spain. Emile Burns. (Labour Research Department.) 16 pp. 1d.

Fifty Years a Borough : The Story of West Ham. West Ham Borough Council. 298 pp.

Moscow Admits a Critic. Sir Bernard Pares. (Nelson.) 94 pp. 2s. 6d.

Eastern Menace. Union of Democratic Control. 96 pp. 6d.

Political Spies and Provocative Agents. Second and Enlarged Edition. F. W. Chandler. 23 Abbey Lane, Sheffield. 149 pp. 6d.

Gas Attacks : Is there any Protection? The Socialist Medical Council. 31 pp. 6d.

France Faces the Future. Ralph Fox. (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd.) 134 pp. 2s. 6d.

The Correct Economy for the Machine Age. A. G. McGregor. (Pitman.) 353 pp. 6s.

I Search for Truth in Russia. Sir Walter Citrine. (Routledge.) 368 pp. 10s. 6d.

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